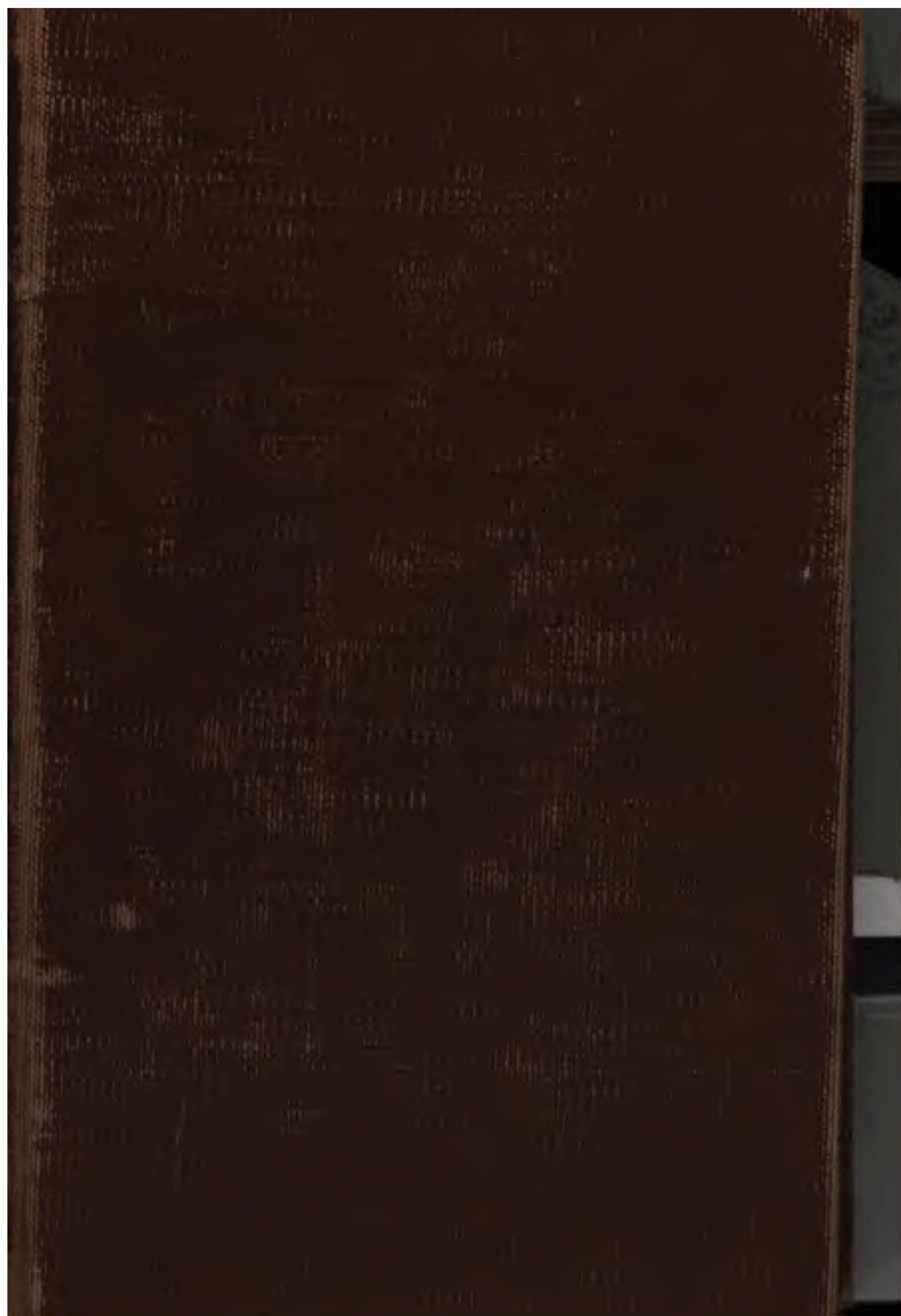
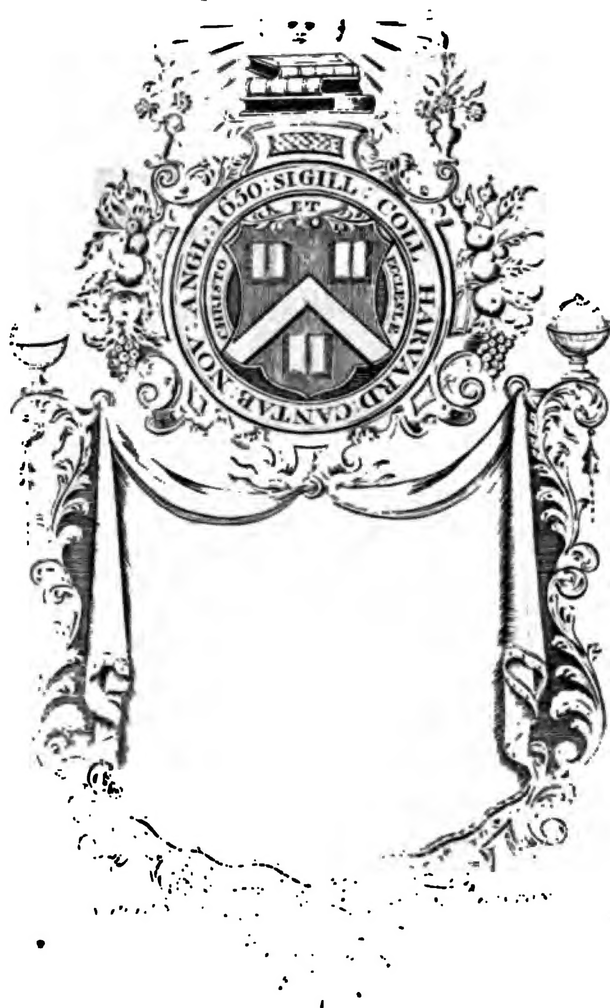




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CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE



THE

HISTORY OF PERSIA,

FROM THE

MOST EARLY PERIOD

TO

THE PRESENT TIME:

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE

RELIGION, GOVERNMENT, USAGES, AND CHARACTER

OF THE

INHABITANTS OF THAT KINGDOM.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR JOHN MALCOLM, G.C.B., K.L.S.,

GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY.

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HISTORY OF PERSIA.

Chapter XV.

THE HISTORY OF NADIR SHAH, AND HIS IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS.

The rise of Nâdir Shah from the lowest rank of life to be the absolute monarch of his country, is an event which would attract attention, even if the guilty fame he acquired as a conqueror and destroyer had not perpetuated his memory. The first enthusiasm of the religion of Mahomed had swept away the Sassanian dynasty; but a bold and able leader [a], by the destruction of the power of the caliphs, had rescued his country from the ignominy of being a province of another empire, and restored it to its dignity as a kingdom. From that period it had been in possession of Tartar chiefs, who had generally migrated with their tribes into the milder climate of Persia, and whose power was continued for a time by the support of those warlike followers by whom it had been established. A revolution of a very singular nature had transferred the crown of Persia from these Tartar chiefs to the son of an ascetic [b]. Several among the early Seffavean princes were worthy of their destiny; but the last century of their rule presents us with a picture which can excite only disgust and indignation; and such was the debased and worthless character of some of these monarchs, that the mind is almost reconciled to the dreadful scenes amid which they perished.

[a] Yacoob-ben-Leis. Vide vol. i. p. 147.
[b] Shah Ismael.

In countries where the government is despotic, the opinion of the people is seldom heard; but it appears often in action. It is always in extremes, and generally determined by contrast. We can well conceive, that, when weakness, cruelty, and debauchery, seemed the chief qualities of a sovereign, and when the nobles were only remarkable for their effeminate vices and their cowardice, a fallen and suffering nation like Persia should have turned its eyes with admiration and hope on the character of Nâdir Shah. The lowness of his birth, the coarseness of his manners, and the daring though guilty actions of his early life, were all calculated to favour these impressions, as they placed him in complete opposition to those rulers and nobles to whom they attributed all their misfortunes.

Several events in the life of Nâdir Shah have been already related; but it will be necessary to preface the account of his reign[c] with a cursory view of the occurrences which preceded his elevation to the throne.

The father of Nâdir Shah belonged to the tribe of Affshâr, one of the seven Turkish tribes which attached themselves to the Seffavean kings. His name was Imâm Kooli; and we must conclude from every account that he was a person of no note or rank. Nâdir Kooli[d] himself never

[c] The life of Nâdir Shah, like that of Timoor, has been given by a flatterer. Meerza Mehdee, his confidential secretary, who attended him in all his expeditions, has written an account of his actions; and his work has been translated by Sir William Jones. The credit to which this volume is entitled, is not destroyed by its being written in a strain of eulogy. The author survived his sovereign; and the free manner in which he has detailed the actions which disgraced his latter years, may be received as a proof of the authenticity of the rest. But we have in the works of Jonas Hanway a very elaborate life of this tyrant; and the personal knowledge this author had of many of the facts which he records, gives it particular value. We have also a Memoir of Nâdir written by Mr. Fraser, from Persian manuscripts obtained in India. In addition to all these authentic materials, I obtained in Persia, a copy of his correspondence, and several other valuable manuscripts relating events connected with his life.

[d] Kooli means "slave;" Nâdir, "wonderful;" and the latter term is used as an epithet to describe the Almighty. His name, therefore, signified

boasted of a proud genealogy: even his flattering historian[e], though he informs us that the father of his hero was a man of some consequence in his tribe, reveals the truth by a metaphorical apology for low birth, saying, that the diamond has its value from its own lustre, not from that of the rock where it grew. We learn from other sources[f], that he earned his livelihood by making coats and caps of sheepskins[g]. Nâdir often spoke of his low birth; and when the pride of the royal house of Delhi required that his son[h], who was to marry a princess of that family, should give an account of his male ancestors for seven generations, the conqueror exclaimed: "Tell them that he is son of Nâdir Shah, the son of the sword, the grandson of the sword, and so on, till they have a descent of seventy instead of seven generations[i]!"

Nâdir Shah was born in Khorassan[k]. Persian historians pass over the early occurrences of his life: the first event that they notice, is the birth of his eldest son, Rizâ Kooli, when he was thirty-one years of age[l]. He had before that experienced great vicissitudes of fortune, and had given proofs both of valour and talents. When only seventeen, he was taken prisoner by the Oosbegs, who made annual

"the slave of the wonderful, or of God." When he was promoted by the favour of Shah Tâmâsp to the dignity of a khan, he took the name of that monarch, and was called Tâmâsp Kooli Khan; but, on reaching the throne, he styled himself Nâdir Shah, resuming his original name of Nâdir, which is the one I shall use throughout his history. Meerza Mehdee, in his Life of Nâdir Shah, never mentions him under the name of Tâmâsp Kooli Khan, which leads Sir William Jones to doubt the fact of his having assumed that appellation.

[e] Meerza Mehdee.

[f] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 257.

[g] Persian MSS.

[h] This prince's name was Naser Ali.

[i] Persian MSS.

[k] Sir William Jones, following Meerza Mehdee, fixes his birth on Sunday, the 11th of November, 1688. Hanway, who cannot be expected to be so correct as the Persian historian in his dates, places his birth in 1687.

[l] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 28.

incursions into Khorassan; but he effected his escape after a captivity of four years [m]. His occupation from that time, till he entered into the service of Shah Tâmâsp, only merit notice, as it shows that his character was always the same. He was at one time in the service of a petty chief [n] of his native province, whom he murdered, and whose daughter [o] he carried off and married. After this, he obtained a precarious subsistence by heading a band of robbers [p], from which occupation he passed, by a transition easy in such troubled times, into the employment of the Governor of Khorassan, by whom he was at first raised to rank and command, as a reward for his valour in actions with the Oosbegs; and afterwards degraded and punished with the bastinado, on account of his insolent and turbulent conduct.

Irritated at this disgrace, Nâdir left Meshed, and went to the fort of Kelât in the same province, which was in the possession of his uncle, who appears at this period to have been at the head of a small branch of the Affshârs. He resided there but a short time, before his relation, alarmed at his violence and ambition, compelled him to retire. He appears next to have resumed his occupation of robber; but his depredations were now on a more extended scale. The Affghans had become masters of Isfahan; and the rule of the Seffavean kings over the distant provinces was subverted, without that of their conquerors being established. At such a moment a plunderer of known valour and experience could not want followers; and in a short time we find Nâdir a chief of reputation, at the head of three thousand men, levying large contributions on the inhabitants of Khorassan [q]. His uncle, alarmed at his increasing power, sought his friendship. He addressed a kind letter to him,

[m] His mother was taken at the same time, and died in Tartary.—Hanway, vol. ii. p. 257.

[n] The name of this chief was Babool-beg.

[o] This lady was the mother of the Prince Rizâ Kooli.

[p] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 259.

[q] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 261.

and proposed that he should enter into the service of Shah Tâmâsp, and aid him in expelling the Affghans from Persia. Nâdir pretended to listen to this overture, and earnestly desired that the king would grant him a pardon for his past offences. This was easily obtained; and he went to Kelât to receive it. He appears to have always deemed the governor of that place as the chief obstacle to his rise; and at this moment he laid a plan to destroy him, and to seize his fortress. He succeeded in both; and, after having slain his uncle[r] with his own hand, proceeded to employ the force acquired by this crime against the Affghan ruler of Khorassan. This popular attack on the enemies of his country enabled him to obtain a second pardon from Shah Tâmâsp, into whose service he entered, and to whose cause he brought a great accession of strength and reputation.

Shah Tâmâsp early entertained great jealousy of Nâdir; and on his disobeying a mandate to return from an expedition on which he was engaged, the weak monarch ventured to proclaim him a rebel and a traitor. The indignant chief, the moment he heard of these proceedings, marched against the court, and soon compelled it to submit on the terms he chose to dictate[s]. From this open rupture, which took place soon after the conquest of Meshed, we may date the annihilation of the little power Tâmâsp had ever enjoyed. Nâdir continued to treat him with respect, till he deemed the time mature for usurping the throne; but we discover that, as early as his first expedition into Khorassan, he began to prepare the minds of his countrymen for his future elevation. Like Ardisheer, the founder of the Sassanian race, he had his visions of future grandeur. He saw, we are told, a water-fowl and a white fish with four horns: he dreamt that he shot the bird; and, after all his

[r] Some oriental writers, who find nothing but virtue in the early life of Nâdir, inform us, that his uncle was an usurper of his right, and that his nephew, by slaying him, at once did an act of justice, and possessed himself of the means to save his country.—Fraser's *History of Nâdir Shah.*

[s] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 64.

attendants had failed to seize the extraordinary fish, he stretched out his hand and caught it with ease[t]. His dreaming of a bird and a fish, he was informed by flattering astrologers, was a certain presage of his attaining imperial power; and his historian[u] has had a less difficult task in discovering from subsequent events, that the four horns were the kingdoms of Persia, Khaurizm, India, and Tartary, all destined to be conquered by this hero. Such trifles are not unworthy of notice; they show the art or superstition of him who uses or believes in them, and portray, better than the most elaborate descriptions, the character of the minds on which they act.

The expulsion of the Affghans seemed to have been effected solely by the genius of Nâdir; no reward, therefore, appeared too great for the man who had liberated his country. The grant made to him by Tâmâsp, of the four finest provinces[x] in the empire, was considered only a just recompense for his great services. We are told, that in the same letter by which Tâmâsp conveyed this grant, or, in other words, alienated half his kingdom, his victorious general was requested to assume the title of sultan, and a diadem richly set with jewels was sent by a nobleman of the court. Nâdir accepted all the honors[y] except the title of sultan[z]; that high name, he thought, would excite envy without conferring benefit; he, however, took advantage of this proffered dignity to exercise one of the most important royal privileges. He directed that his army should be paid in coin brought from Khorassan, and that it should be struck in his own name, which virtually amounted to assuming the independent sovereignty of that country.

The conquests made by the Turks have been mentioned.

[t] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 65.

[u] Meerza Mehdee.

[x] Khorassan, Mazenderan, Seestan, and Kerman.

[y] A marriage was, at this period, agreed upon between Rizâ Kooli, the eldest son of Nâdir, and a daughter of the late sultan, Shah Hoossein.

[z] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 111.

Their armies continued to occupy some of the finest parts of Irak, and all Aderbejan. Nâdir marched against them as soon as his troops were refreshed from the fatigues they had endured in pursuing the Affghans. He encountered the united forces of two Turkish pâchâs on the plains of Hamadan, overthrew them, and made himself master, not only of that city, but of all the country in its vicinity[a]. He hastened to Aderbejan, where the same success attended him. Tebreez, Ardebil, and all the principal cities surrendered; and the conqueror was preparing to besiege Erivân, the capital of Armenia, when he received from his brother, whom he had left in the government of Khorassan, an account of an alarming rebellion of the Affghans in that province. He hastened to its relief; and his success against the rebels was completed by the reduction of the fortresses of Furrâh and Herat. An event occurred, during the siege of the latter, which marked the barbarous character of this war. Nâdir had obtained a victory over a large division of the Affghans, and resolved to celebrate it with a splendid feast. Among other guests were several prisoners of high rank. During the festivities, the heads of three hundred Affghans, who had been slain in the action, were held up on the tops of spears. "At this sight," says the flattering historian of Nâdir, "the chiefs of our enemies fixed their eyes on the ground, and never dared to raise them again, notwithstanding the extraordinary kindness with which they were treated by their great and generous conqueror[b]!"

While Nâdir was at the siege of Herat, the Persian nobles at Isfahan persuaded Tâmâsp to place himself at the head of an army and march against the Turks, who were again assembling on the frontier. The reverses which their arms had sustained in Persia had caused a revolution at Constantinople, where the janizaries first murdered the

[a] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 112.

[b] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 144.

vizier, and afterwards dethroned Ahmed[c], and placed his nephew, Mahmood[d], upon the throne. To this prince Nâdir had sent an envoy[e], demanding that the Turks should evacuate Aderbejan; and Shah Tâmâsp had sent another with what a Persian historian indignantly terms "a sweet-scented letter of congratulation," on his elevation to the throne. Before the result of Nâdir's mission could be known, Tâmâsp had marched to besiege Erivân; had retreated from before it; had been defeated by a Turkish army; and had lost in one month all that his general had gained during the preceding season. To complete the effects of his weakness, the alarmed monarch had agreed to a peace, by which he abandoned the whole country beyond the Araxes to the Turks, and ceded five districts of Kermanshah to Ahmed, the reigning Pâchâ of Bagdad, by whom this treaty was negotiated. The disgrace of this engagement was aggravated, by its containing no stipulation for the release of the Persians who had been made prisoners during the war.

The moment Nâdir received accounts of this peace, it seems to have occurred to him, that it afforded an excellent pretext for consummating the projects he had so long cherished: but, though bold and impatient, he was compelled to proceed with caution in the extinction of a race of kings to whom obedience had become a habit, and who were, at that moment, represented by a prince weak indeed and despicable, but endeared to many of his subjects by his misfortunes. His first step was to issue a proclamation, inveighing with bitterness against a treaty which bounded the empire of Persia by the river Araxes, and left many of its inhabitants prisoners in the hands of cruel enemies. "Such a treaty," he said, "is contrary to the will of Heaven; and the angels, who guard the tomb of the holy Ali, call aloud for the

[c] Ahmed the Third.
[d] Mahmood the Fifth.
[e] Rizâ Kooli Khan.

deliverance of his followers from the bondage in which they are now held by vile heretics[f]."

There is no country, however abject its inhabitants, where the most daring and ambitious can venture to usurp the supreme power, without first obtaining a hold on public opinion; and we cannot have a stronger proof of this, than the conduct of Nâdir on this memorable occasion. Though he had revived the military spirit of his country, and roused a nation sunk in sloth and luxury to great and successful exertion, yet neither this success, nor the imbecility of Shah Tâmâsp, nor even a reliance on his own fame and strength, could induce him to take the last step, until by his arts he had excited in his countrymen that contempt for the reigning sovereign and that pride in his own glory which was likely to make his elevation appear more the work of their wishes than of his ambition.

At the same time that Nâdir published the proclamation which has been mentioned, he addressed letters to all the military chiefs of the country. In that to the governor of Fars, which has been preserved[g], he informs him of the great success he has had against the Affghans, and of the conquest of Herat. He then proceeds to state the astonishment and indignation with which he has learnt the particulars of the treaty concluded with Turkey. "You will, no doubt," he observes, "be rejoiced to hear, that, as was to be hoped from the goodness of God, this peace with the Turks is not likely to endure; and you may rest in expectation of my approach; for, by the blessing of the Most High, I will advance immediately, with an army elated with success, skilled in sieges, numerous as emmets, valiant as lions, and combining with the vigour of youth the prudence of age. Let the cup-bearer (he exclaims, quoting Hafiz) tell our enemy, the worshipper of fire, to cover his head with dust; for the water that had departed, is returned into

[f] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 154.
[g] MS. Collection of Nâdir Shah's Letters.

its channel." He concludes this letter by threatening, with excommunication and destruction, all Sheahs, or, in other words, all Persians adverse to the renewal of hostilities. "Those Sheahs who are backward on this great occasion, and are reconciled to this shameful peace, shall be expelled from the faithful sect, and for ever counted among its enemies. To slay them will be meritorious; to permit their existence, impious."

The actions of Nâdir corresponded with these declarations. He sent an officer to Constantinople, with this short message to the Emperor Mahmood: "Restore the Persian provinces[h], or prepare for war." A messenger was despatched to Ahmed, the Pâchâ of Bagdad, to apprise him, "that the deliverer of Persia" was approaching. A peace had been concluded with the Russians, by which it was stipulated that they should abandon all their conquests on the Caspian; and Nâdir sent two officers to see that there was no delay in its execution.

After adopting these measures, Nâdir marched to Isfahan. He first upbraided Shah Tâmâsp with his conduct in making peace with the Turks, and then pretended to be reconciled to him: but the scene of his mock submission drew to a close. Tâmâsp was invited to the tents of his general to share in the pleasures of a feast, which terminated in his being seized, and dethroned[i]. He was sent to Khorassan. The Mahomedan author[k] who records these events, is careful to inform us, that Nâdir generously desired that Tâmâsp, though a prisoner, should be accompanied by all his ladies, and enjoy every other comfort which could be deemed necessary to pleasurable existence.

The time did not yet appear to Nâdir ripe for his seizing the crown of Persia. The officers of his army, and some venal nobles of the court, earnestly requested that he, who

[h] Georgia was the principal province alienated by the treaty, and that part of Aderbejan which lies to the north of the Araxes.

[i] The 26th of August.

[k] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 162.

was alone worthy to wear the diadem, would place it upon his head: but he rejected their entreaties, from pretended respect for the blood of the Seffavean kings. The son of Tâmâsp, an infant[l] only eight months old, was seated upon the throne, and Nâdir accepted the name and power of regent of the empire[m].

When the ceremonies of this coronation were over, Nâdir marched with a large army to attack Bagdad. The governor of that city, Ahmed Pâchâ, was no less distinguished for his talents as a soldier than as a statesman; and the Persian leader had made his preparations in the expectation of an obstinate defence: but neither the valour nor skill of Ahmed would have saved his city, had not the Turkish general, Topâl Osman, advanced, at the head of an immense army[n], to his relief. Nâdir instantly resolved to hazard a battle. He left a small part[o] of his army in his lines, and led the remainder to attack Topâl Osman, who was encamped on the banks of the Tigris, near the village of Sâmârâh, about sixty miles from Bagdad. The action was one of the bloodiest ever fought between the Turks and Persians. At first it was favorable to the latter, whose cavalry put the enemy to flight: but the Turkish infantry advanced and restored the battle. A corps of Arabs, from whom Nâdir expected support, fell upon one of his flanks. His men, who had been exposed all day to the intense rays of a summer sun, were faint with heat and thirst. He himself twice fell to the ground, in the midst of his enemies, his horses being shot; and his standard-bearer, conceiving him slain, fled from the field. All these causes combined to give the victory to Topâl Osman; and, after a contest of more

[l] This child is called Abbas the Third. He is included, by some historians, in the list of Persian kings.

[m] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 162.

[n] Meerza Mehdee asserts, that this army amounted to one hundred thousand men.

[o] According to Meerza Mehdee, he left a body of twelve thousand men in the trenches before Bagdad.—Sir William Jones's *Works*, vol. v. p. 174.

than eight hours, the army of Nâdir was completely defeated. The moment the news reached Bagdad, its inhabitants fell on the troops left to guard the trenches, who were also routed. The loss of the Persians in this battle was estimated by their enemies at sixty thousand men; and it probably amounted to more than a third of that number. The Turks suffered almost as severely: but their triumph was complete; for Nâdir did not reassemble his broken and dispersed army till he reached the plains of Hamadan, more than two hundred miles from the field of action.

There is no period in the life of Nâdir at which he appears to more advantage than after this great misfortune. Instead of reproaching his soldiers with their defeat, he loaded them with praises and favours. Their losses in money and horses were more than repaid, and they were encouraged by his exhortations as well as his actions, to desire nothing so much as an opportunity of revenging themselves on their enemies. This conduct increased his reputation and popularity to such a degree, that recruits from every part of Persia hastened to join his standard; and in less than three months, Nâdir descended again into the plains of Bagdad, with an army more numerous than before.

His brave antagonist, Topâl Osman, had jealous rivals at the court of Constantinople, who, alarmed at the fame he had acquired, not only by their intrigues prevented his being reinforced with men, but, by withholding the supplies of money necessary to pay his troops, compelled him to separate his forces. He, nevertheless, made the greatest efforts to oppose this second invasion. He sent a corps of cavalry to arrest the progress of the Persians: but the latter, eager for revenge, made such a sudden and furious attack on it, that they completely routed it. On hearing this, the Turkish general advanced with all the troops he had been able to draw together; but his own army partook in the panic of their flying comrades. Topâl Osman endeavoured in vain to rally them. He was so infirm, that

he was always carried in a litter. His attendants, in the hope that he might escape, lifted him (when the flight became general) upon a horse; but his rich dress attracted a Persian soldier, who pierced him with his lance, and then severing his head from his body, bore it to his commander. We are pleased to find that Nâdir respected the remains of his former conqueror[p]. His head and corpse were sent by an officer of rank to the Turkish army, that they might receive those honorable rites of sepulture, which in all nations are considered due to a great and valiant soldier.

After the death of Topâl Osman, and the defeat of his army, Nâdir proceeded to invest Bagdad[q]; but being alarmed at the account of a serious revolt in Fars[r], he readily listened to the terms which the governor proposed, that Turkey and Persia should repossess such countries as belonged to them in the reign of Sultan Hoossein, before the Affghan invasion. The rebellion which compelled him to retire from the Turkish territories, had hardly been suppressed, before he learnt that the Emperor of Constantinople had refused to ratify the engagements made by the

[p] There is a very interesting account of this celebrated Turkish general in Hanway. Topâl Osman had been taken in his early life by a Spanish privateer: he was ransomed and restored to his country by the generosity of a French officer, of the name of Vincent Arnaud, at Malta. The gratitude and kindness which he showed to his deliverer give us the best impression of his private virtues. He was raised to the high but dangerous dignity of prime vizier in 1731, and his first act was to desire the French ambassador to write for his benefactor. "Bid him make haste," said Topâl Osman, "for we viziers seldom last long." Before he was promoted to this high station, he had repaid Arnaud tenfold for his ransom; but he now loaded him with caresses and favours, and made a glory of presenting to the whole court the virtuous and generous man to whom he owed his life and liberty. When Topâl Osman was removed from the office of vizier, he publicly returned thanks to Heaven for having been released with honour from such a burden. He was afterwards raised to the command of the Turkish armies on the Persian frontier, and terminated his life as has been described.

[q] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 190.

[r] This rebellion was headed by Mahomed Khan, who was the chief of a tribe of Balochees: after he was taken prisoner he hanged himself.

Pâchâ of Bagdad, and had sent a general named Abdûlla[s], at the head of a large force, with orders, either to conclude peace, or to continue the war, as circumstances should render expedient. Nâdir hastened to occupy Armenia and Georgia, the principal of the disputed provinces. He threw a bridge over the Araxes; and at once invested the cities of Teflis, Gunjah, and Erivân, in the hope that this would lead the Turkish general to hazard an action. Nor was he deceived. Abdûlla, encouraged by his superior numbers, left his entrenchments[t], and attacked the Persians on the plains of Bâghâvund, near Erivân. Nâdir, when he saw him advancing, addressed his troops in the most animated language. "Your enemies," he said, "outnumber you eight to one[u]; but that is only an incitement to glorious exertion. I dreamt last night that a furious animal rushed into my tent, and, after a long struggle, I slew it[x]. With such an omen, success is certain to those who fight under the protection of His great arm, who raiseth the weak to glory, and casteth down the proud oppressors." If his troops were encouraged by this speech, they were still more by his example. After making the ablest disposition of his army, he rushed on the enemy at the head of his bravest men; wherever he led, the Persians were irresistible. In one of these charges Abdûlla Pâchâ was slain by a soldier[y], who brought his head to Nâdir; as the battle still raged, he directed it to be fixed upon a spear, and displayed where it would be best seen by the enemy. The effect was what he anticipated. The Turks, perceiving

[s] Hanway styles this officer Abdûlla Kouprouli, Pâchâ of Cairo.—HANWAY, vol. ii. p. 336.

[t] He had fortified a camp near the city of Kars, (the Charsa of Ptolemy,) which is at present subject to Turkey, and has a population of about thirty thousand souls.—KINNIER's *Memoir of Persia*, p. 323.

[u] Meerza Mehdee gives an exaggerated account of the number of the Turks. They had, he asserts, sixty thousand cavalry and fifty thousand infantry.

[x] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 216.

[y] The name of this man was Roostem.—Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir WILLIAM JONES's *Works*, vol. v. p. 217.

their general was slain, fled in every direction, and left the plain covered with their dead. This victory was followed by the submission of the cities of Gunjah and Teflis: and those of Kars and Erivân, with all the former possessions of the Persians in that quarter[a], were soon afterwards ceded to him by the Ottoman Court, who, taught by misfortune, were glad to conclude a peace on the basis before settled by the Pâchâ of Bagdad.

The period was now arrived when Nâdir thought he might lay aside the veil he had hitherto worn. The infant[a] sovereign of Persia had died at Isfahan, and consequently the throne was vacant. It has always been the usage of the kings of Persia to observe the Nou Rôze, or vernal equinox, as a great festival, on which all the chief officers, civil and military, of the government appear at court. Nâdir issued an order, that not only these, but every person of rank and consideration in the kingdom, should meet him, on the day of that festival, on the plains of Chowal Mogâm[b], where he ordered a number of temporary buildings to be erected, and made every preparation to receive them with splendour and magnificence. We are informed, that upwards of a hundred thousand persons attended this celebrated meeting: if this includes the troops, the amount is probably not exaggerated.

[a] During the three months between the victory of Bâghâvund and the conclusion of peace, Nâdir was employed in the reduction of the Lesghees, a savage tribe who dwell on the mountains that separate Georgia from the Caspian, and continually harass that province with their irruptions.

[a] Many authors state that the child died a natural death; but this is of little consequence. It cannot be supposed that Nâdir could ever have hesitated a moment in removing so frail an obstacle, (if that had been necessary,) to clear the path of his ambition.

[b] "The celebrated Chowal Mogâm, or Plain of Mogâm, extends from the neighbourhood of Ardebil to the mouths of the Cyrus. It is reported to be sixty fursungs in length, and twenty in breadth; and its rich soil, and luxuriant pastures, seem to have rendered it the favorite encamping ground of most eastern conquerors. The victorious career of Pompey the Great was arrested by the venomous serpents with which it is thought to be infested. Heraclius passed some time at Mogâm."—KINNIER's *Memoir of Persia*, p. 182.

Nâdir (his historian informs us) assembled the principal nobles and officers on the morning of the festival, and addressed them in the following terms[c]:—"Shah Tâmâsp and Shah Abbas were your kings, and the princes of their blood are the heirs to the throne. Choose one of them for your sovereign, or some other person whom you know to be great and virtuous. It is enough for me that I have restored the throne to its glory, and delivered my country from the Affghans, the Turks, and the Russians." He retired, that their deliberations might seem more free, but was soon recalled to hear their unanimous request, that he, who had saved his country, and was alone able to protect it, should accept the crown. He refused this offer, protesting solemnly that the idea of ascending the throne of Persia had never once entered his imagination![d] The same scene was acted every day for a month, till Nâdir, appearing to be subdued by their earnest solicitations, agreed to comply with their wishes; but said, when he made this apparent concession, "I must insist that, as I sacrifice so much for Persia, the inhabitants of it, in consideration for one who has no object but their tranquillity, shall abandon the belief introduced by Shah Ismael, the founder of the Seffavean dynasty, and once more acknowledge the legitimate authority of the four first caliphs[e]. Since the schism of Sheah has prevailed, this country has been in continual distraction: let us all become Soonees, and that will cease. But as every national religion should have a head, let the holy Imâm Jaffier, who is of the family of the prophet, and whom we all venerate, be the head of ours." After the assembly[f] had con-

[c] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 235.

[d] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 236.

[e] Aboobeker, Osman, Omar, and Ali.

[f] I follow the historian of Nâdir, Meerza Mehdee. Hanway and others inform us, that the chief priest rose, and advised Nâdir to confine himself to temporal affairs, and not to interfere with matters of religion. The *sudden death* of this rash counsellor warned others into a speedy assent to all Nâdir's propositions.—Hanway, vol. ii. p. 341. Fraser's *History of Nâdir Shah*, p. 118.

sented to this change, and a royal mandate[g] had been issued to proclaim it, Nâdir informed them, that he would communicate what had been done to the Emperor of Constantinople, and require him to give full effect to this advance toward general concord among Mahomedans; and he would also insist that, as there were now four orthodox sects[h]

[g] The following translation of the edict issued on this occasion, is given by an English writer:—

"To all in high stations, the chief pontiff, the governors, ministers of the law, and learned men of the royal residence of Isfahan, being exalted through the king's favor, know ye, that while the abode of our ensigns (on whom victory attends) was at Chowal Mogâm, it was agreed at several meetings, that from henceforth, according to ancient custom, (being fixed and established in the religion of Haneefa and Jaffier, as transmitted to us by our predecessors,) we do acknowledge the directing caliphs (in all whom the high God is pleased) as the successors of the chief of messengers; and whenever they present themselves, mention the names of each of the four with great respect. Moreover, in some places of these kingdoms, at the time of calling to prayers, and standing up at prayer, then mention these words, 'Ali, the friend of God,' according to the usual method of the Sheahs, and contrary to those who are orthodox. This is repugnant to religion, and contrary to the agreement and covenant entered into. Besides, it is evident to the world, that as the prince of the faithful, the lion of God, the victorious, is elect, praised, and acceptable to the Lord of glory, his rank and interest at the court of unity will not be increased by vulgar testimony, nor the full moon of his power be diminished by omitting these words. The ill consequence of this form is, that both sects, who equally acknowledge the chief and prophet of both worlds, will, by this difference, be provoked to animosities, which are disagreeable both to the prophet and to the prince of the faithful. Wherefore, as soon as the purport of this high edict is known, let it be signified to all Musselmen, high and low, great and small, the callers to prayer in the city, its dependencies, and the adjacent countries, that from this day henceforth, these words, as differing from the orthodox custom, be not mentioned. It is also usual with the governors in their assemblies, after Fattaha and Tokbir, to say, 'May the king, from whom all our fortune flows, live for ever.' As a Tokbir for perpetuating a mortal man is vain, and of no effect, I expressly order, that every khan who is a master of a tabal and ensign, say it in this manner: 'Thanks to the true king for all benefits.' From henceforward all persons must observe these settled regulations, and written orders: for whosoever deviates therefrom, will incur the displeasure of the king of kings. Written in the month of Suffer, 1149."—Frasier's *History of Nâdir Shah*, p. 123.

[h] The sects of Haneefa, Shaffei, Malik, and Hanbal; each of which have an oratory at the temple of Mecca.

among Soonees, the Persians, under the name of the sect of Jaffier, should be admitted as the fifth, and that another column should be added to the four[i] which already decorated the temple at Mecca, in honour of this new branch of the true religion.

Various conjectures have been made respecting the motives which induced Nâdir to propose to the Persians the abandonment of their belief as Sheahs. He had professed himself a warm admirer of the doctrines of this sect, and had used every effort in his power to kindle the very belief which he now desired to suppress. But the conqueror was always consistent: he worshipped at no shrine but that of ambition. While he pretended to be the slave of a Seffavean king, and desired only to expel the Affghans and Turks, he tried to obtain strength by exciting in his countrymen all the rancorous feeling of an opposite sect. But when success extended his views; when he resolved on the extinction of the descendants of Shah Ismael; and began, in his waking visions, to contemplate, as parts of his future empire, the mountains of Candahar, the plains of India, and the fine provinces of Asia Minor, he naturally sought the abolition of a sect, which, by its very institution, revived the memory of a family he had destroyed, and which appeared, from the hatred with which its followers were regarded by the nations he proposed to subdue, likely to interpose a considerable obstacle to the progress of his power.

The historian of Nâdir is careful in informing us, that the crown of Persia was placed upon the head of the conqueror exactly at twenty minutes past eight on the morning of the 26th of February[k]. The moment, no doubt, had been fixed by the most skilful astrologers. The ceremony was performed in a splendid hall erected for the occasion; and Nâdir was seated on a throne covered with precious

[i] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 238.
[k] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 239.

jewels. Various coins were immediately struck in his name, on which was the following inscription[l]: "The impression stamped upon this gold proclaims to the world the sovereignty of Nâdir, native of the land of Persia, and the monarch who subdues the earth." On the reverse was a short Arabic sentence, which signified, "That which has happened is the best." But even the flatterer[m] who records these particulars confesses, that there were malicious wits who made free with the latter sentence, and, by altering the position of a letter, made it signify, "That which has happened is not the best."

Nâdir Shah, soon after his elevation to the throne, marched to Isfahan; but the short time he spent there was solely devoted to military preparations: he had resolved on the extinction of the Affghans as a separate power; and that could not be effected without reducing the city and province of Candahar, then in possession of a prince called Hoossein Khan, the brother of the celebrated Mahmood. Before he proceeded on this expedition, he adopted every measure that could secure the internal tranquillity of Persia[n] during his absence. The peace of the country round Isfahan had been much disturbed by the depredations of a numerous and barbarous tribe, called Bukhteeârees, inhabiting the mountains which stretch from near this capital to the vicinity of Shuster. The subjugation of these plunderers had ever been deemed impossible. Their lofty and rugged mountains abound with rocks and caverns, which, in times of danger, serve them as fastnesses and dens. But Nâdir

[l] Some of these coins are in the Bodleian Library. The Persian stanza is,
Siccâ bur zer kurd, nâm e Sultanet der Jehân,
Nâder e Irân zumeen ou Khoosrooe Geetee Sitân.
The Arabic sentence on the reverse was *Al Kheir fimâ wâkâ:* when changed by the wits, it was *Lâ Kheir fimâ wâkâ.* The letters of the Arabic sentence on Nâdir's seal form, as numerals, 1149, the date of the Hijrah on which he ascended the throne.

[m] Meerza Mehdee.

[n] The Island of Bahrein was taken this year from the Arabs, by Mahomed Tuckee Khan, the Governor of Fars.

showed that this fancied security, which had protected them for ages, was a mere delusion. He led his veteran soldiers to the tops of their highest mountains; parties of light troops hunted them from the cliffs and glens in which they were concealed; and in the space of one month, the tribe was completely subdued. Their chief[o] was taken prisoner, and put to death: but Nâdir treated such of his followers as escaped the first fury of his troops with lenity and favor: he assigned to them better, but more accessible lands: he also took a number of them into his army; and this corps, by its extraordinary bravery at the siege of Candahar, confirmed the wisdom of his generous conduct.

Nâdir now marched with eighty thousand men through Khorassan and Seestan to Candahar. He met with no resistance of any consequence before he reached that city; but he found its defences too formidable to give him hopes of its early surrender. His first resolution was to subdue it by blockade; and he not only made permanent cantonments for his army in its vicinity, but ordered the lines of a new city to be traced out, which he called Nâdirâbâd, or "the abode of Nâdir[p]." He also built towers all round Candahar, and so connected them with small batteries, that it became impossible for the besieged to maintain any intercourse with the surrounding country[q]. Observing, however, that the Affghans were not intimidated by these indications of his resolution to conquer them, and that they had still abundance of provisions, he was compelled after a year had been wasted in the blockade, to commence more active operations. The city of Candahar stood on the face of a hill, and was defended by a wall, and by a number of small towers. The Persians made themselves masters of some of the most commanding eminences, to which, with incredible labour, they

[o] The name of this chief was Ali Moorâd.

[p] After Candahar was taken, almost all the inhabitants removed to this new city, which, after the death of its founder, received the name of Candahar. The modern Candahar is close to the site of the old city.

[q] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 258.

conveyed both cannon and mortars. Aided by the fire of these, they successively assailed the different towers. From some they were repulsed with great loss; against others they succeeded: the bravery of the Bukhteeârees, who have been before mentioned, carried a principal tower, which enabled them to enter the citadel, and placed the whole town as their mercy. The governor, however, with the main part of the garrison, still held out in a detached fort: but, seeing that resistance was vain, he offered to capitulate; and Nâdir readily gave him a promise of forgiveness and protection. It appears at this period to have been the policy of the conqueror to conciliate the Affghans. He had, in a great degree disarmed their prejudices, by his proclamation against the Sheahs; and he now sought, not merely to soften their resentment, but to attach them to his person and government by favors. He completely succeeded: some of the tribes of that nation continued, during his life, to rank among the bravest soldiers of his army, and formed a powerful check upon the discontent and turbulence of his own countrymen.

While Nâdir was besieging Candahar, his generals had reduced the strong holds in its vicinity; and his eldest son, Rizâ Kooli, had, during this short period, obtained a fame which seemed to promise that his name would equal his father's. The Affghan prince of Candahar had expected aid from the chief of Bulkh, against whom Nâdir detached his son, with a chosen body of twelve thousand horse. The prince not only defeated his foe, and took his capital, but passed the Oxus, and gave battle to the monarch of the Oosbegs, who had advanced from Bokhara with an army far out-numbering the Persians[r]. The rash valour of Rizâ Kooli was crowned with a signal victory; and the career of the young hero was only arrested by a mandate from his father, desiring him to recross the Oxus. Nâdir at the same time addressed letters to the King of the Oosbegs,

[r] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 266.

and to the other chiefs of that part of Tartary, informing them, that he had sent orders to his son to retreat within the limits of the Persian empire, and not to disturb countries which were the inheritance of the race of Chenghiz Khan, and of high Turkuman families.

This conduct, evidently the result of that policy which affects moderation that it may better accomplish its ambitious purposes, has been ascribed by some to a jealousy which they conceive Nâdir, even at this early period, to have entertained of the rising reputation of his son: but those who impute it to this cause, forget that Rizâ Kooli, when he returned, was not only received with extraordinary favor and affection, but soon afterwards was intrusted with all the power of a sovereign, and left to govern Persia, while his father proceeded in his vast designs of subjugating the distant regions of India.

When Nâdir Shah marched against the Affghans, he had sent an ambassador to Delhi, requesting that the monarch of India would give orders to the governors of his northern provinces not to permit the enemies of Persia to find refuge from an avenging sword, in the territories of an ally[s]. No satisfactory answer had been received; and, while the Affghans were allowed to take shelter within the Indian empire, obstacles were thrown in the way of the return of the Persian envoy. Nâdir, incensed at these proceedings, pursued the fugitives to Cabool, and not only made himself master of that city, but of all the country in its vicinity[t]. After this conquest, he addressed another letter to the Emperor of India, reproaching him, in the bitterest terms, for his past conduct; but still professing a desire to maintain the relations of friendship. The bearer of this letter was slain by an Affghan chief[u]; and Nâdir,

[s] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 278.

[t] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 282.

[u] The name of the chief by whom the Persian envoy was slain, was Wâled Abbas; he was Governor of Jellalabad.—Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's *Works*, vol. v. p. 284.

perhaps, did not regret an event which added to the pretexts that before existed for undertaking the most splendid of his enterprises,—the invasion of India.

Before the events of this memorable expedition are narrated, it may be useful to make some observations on the condition of that great empire, which was threatened with destruction. India had been frequently overrun by the hardy warriors of the north. Since the invasion of Mahmood of Ghizni, Hindoo princes had ceased to reign; and it had continued subject to different dynasties of Mahomedan monarchs, who, in their turns, were overthrown by powerful conquerors. The destructive sword of Timour had desolated those fields which, after a series of extraordinary revolutions, were destined to flourish under his descendants; and the scenes of his bloodiest and most inhuman massacres, by a strange vicissitude of fortune, became those in which his name, as the renowned ancestor of a long race of emperors, was most venerated.

His descendant, Baber, had been driven from his inheritance[x] on the banks of the Jaxartes by the superior numbers of the Oosbegs; but, supported by the attachment of his followers, and his own great qualities, he first established himself in the country of Cabool, and then made himself master of the throne of Delhi, which attained its greatest splendour under his grandson, the celebrated Ackbar. We may date the commencement of its decline from the death of that truly great sovereign; but the appearance, if not the reality, of its former glory was revived by the art, the wisdom, and the valour of Aurungzebe[y], the last prince of the race of Timoor who enjoyed real power: for, besides that common cause of dissolution in such empires, the turbulence and rebellion of those high nobles who, from the constitution of the government, were intrusted with great military power and the charge of distant provinces, a race

[x] The province of Ferghanah.

[y] The great grandson of Ackbar.

of Hindus had arisen in the southern parts of India, who threatened by their bold and incessant depredations, to retaliate on their Mahomedan conquerors all the evils which these had inflicted on their ancestors.

The Marhattas among whom are found the four classes of Hindus, derive their name from the ancient appellation of that region[*] of India of which they are natives. They are, to speak in the language of modern geography, inhabitants of the Deckan. They first became formidable in the reign of Shah Jehan; during thirty years which Aurungzebe passed in the southern provinces of his empire, his chief occupation was to subdue the Marhattas; but he found this impossible, for they never awaited his attack. The country was laid waste, and his troops continually harassed by men, who, from the lightness of their frames, were no burden to their horses; and who, from habits of hardihood and abstemiousness, required little either for shelter or support. It seemed in vain to war with a foe who was intangible, and whose glory lay in the rapidity of his retreat; for the Marhatta soldier, though brave, boasts more of his power to elude, than to attack his enemy.

When the empire of India fell to pieces at the death of Aurungzebe, and the Mahomedan princes and nobles were all ranged against each other, the Marhattas, by continuing united, made a rapid and surprising progress. Besides the great possessions which they actually occupied, they compelled not only the paramount sovereign of India, but almost every ruler of a province, to pay them a considerable part of their annual collections[a], that their habitations and fields might be safe. At the period when Nâdir threatened invasion, the city of Dehli itself was subject to this disgraceful tribute[b].

Mahomed Shah, the ruling emperor, was a weak and dis-

[*] Maharashtra.

[a] This was levied under various names of Choute, Desmookee, &c.

[b] Sier Mutákhereen.

solute prince. Cotemporary authors have told us, "that he was never without a mistress in his arms, and a glass in his hand [c]:" hating occupation, he intrusted others with the management of his empire. His principal vizier was Khan Douran Khan; who, though fond of power, was also devoted to pleasure. The chief rival of this minister was Nizam-ool-moolk, the Subadar, or Viceroy of the Deckan, who had been called to court with no friendly view, and to whose experience and wisdom his monarch did not resort till the danger became imminent and alarming. This nobleman has been accused of having invited Nâdir to invade India. There is, however, no proof of this fact; nor can we assign any reasonable motive for such traitorous conduct in one of the first and most powerful omrahs of the empire; but imputed treachery is ever the shield with which incompetence and cowardice seek to defend themselves. The real truth was, that the distracted and despicable court of Delhi, sensible of their own weakness, tried to persuade themselves that Nâdir would not advance. They had formed an exaggerated opinion of the strength of Candahar, and the valour of its defenders; and when they learnt its fall, they expected the Persian monarch would return to his own dominions. Even when they heard he was at Cabool, they still thought some event might compel him to retire; and this stupid infatuation was hardly dispelled by hearing that he had crossed the Indus. Roused, however, at last to a sense of the great danger with which the empire was threatened, Mahomed Shah, attended by his court, and all the troops he could collect, marched to the plain of Karnal, a village situated on the right bank of the Jumna, about a degree to the north of Delhi, where he surrounded his camp with entrenchments, on which were mounted a useless train of heavy artillery.

The progress of Nâdir from Cabool to India was rapid and successful: almost all the governors of the provinces through which he passed, anticipated the fate of the empire by their

[c] Nâdir Nâmeh.

submission; but the conqueror, in a letter to his son, Rizâ Kooli, has given us the most authentic account of events from the day on which he left Lahore, till that on which he resolved to restore the vanquished Mahomed Shah to the throne of his ancestors. After relating an advantage which his troops had gained over an advanced party of his enemies, and describing an ineffectual attempt he had made to prevent the junction of an army under Saadut Khan with Mahomed Shah, he states, that the Indian monarch considered himself so strong from this reinforcement, that he left his entrenchments, and drew up his troops in order of battle. The result will be best told in Nâdir's own words.

"We, whose wishes were for such a day, after appointing guards for our camp, and invoking the support of an all-powerful Creator, mounted, and advanced to the charge. For two complete hours the action raged with violence, and a heavy fire from cannon and musquetry was kept up. After that, by the aid of the Almighty, our lion-hunting heroes broke the enemy's line, and chased them from the field of battle, dispersing them in every direction [d]. The battle lasted two hours; and for two hours and a half more were our conquering soldiers engaged in pursuit. When one hour of the day remained, the field was entirely cleared of the enemy; and as the entrenchments of their camp were strong, and the fortifications formidable, we would not permit our army to assault it.

"An immense treasure, a number of elephants, part of the artillery of the emperor, and rich spoils of every description, were the reward of our victory. Upwards of twenty thousand of the enemy were slain on the field, and a much greater number were made prisoners. Immediately after the action, we surrounded the emperor's army, and took measures to prevent all communication with the adjacent

[d] He here enumerates the principal chiefs of the Indian army who were killed, severely wounded, or taken prisoners: among the former was Khan Douran, the prime minister; among the latter, Saadut Khan, the general.

country; preparing at the same time our cannon and mortars to level with the ground the fortifications which had been erected.

"As the utmost confusion reigned in the imperial camp, and all discipline was abandoned, the emperor, compelled by irresistible necessity, after the lapse of one day, sent Nizam-ool-moolk, on Thursday, the 17th of Zilkâdeh[e], to our royal camp; and the day following, Mahomed Shah himself, attended by his nobles, came to our heaven-like presence, in an afflicted state.

"When the emperor was approaching, as we are ourselves of a Turkuman family, and Mahomed Shah is a Turkuman, and the lineal descendant of the noble house of Gurgan[f], we sent our dear son, Nasser Ali Khan, beyond the bounds of our camp to meet him. The emperor entered our tents, and we delivered over to him the signet of our empire[g]. He remained that day a guest in our royal tent. Considering our affinity as Turkumans, and also reflecting on the honours that befitted the majesty of a king of kings, we bestowed such upon the emperor, and ordered his royal pavilions, his family, and his nobles, to be preserved; and we have established him in a manner equal to his great dignity.

"At this time, the emperor, with his family, and all the lords of Hindustan, who marched from camp, are arrived at Delhi; and on Thursday, the 29th of Zilkâdeh[h], we moved our glorious standard toward that capital.

"It is our royal intention, from the consideration of the high birth of Mahomed Shah, of his descent from the house of Gurgan, and of his affinity to us as a Turkuman, to fix him on the throne of the empire, and to place the crown of royalty upon his head. Praise be to God, glory

[e] Corresponding with the 19th of February.

[f] This is the common appellation of the house of Timoor.

[g] This mode of reception was as distinguished as if the Emperor of Delhi had visited Nâdir in peace. It was, in fact, treating him as a superior.

[h] Corresponding with the 3rd of March.

to the Most High, who has granted us the power to perform such an action! For this great grace which we have received from the Almighty, we must ever remain grateful.

"God has made the seven great seas like unto the vapour of the desert, beneath our glorious and conquering footsteps, and those of our faithful and victorious heroes. He has made, in our royal mind, the thrones of kings, and the deep ocean of earthly glory, more despicable than the light bubble that floats on the wave; and no doubt his extraordinary mercy, which he has now shown, will be evident to all mankind[i]."

The facts in this letter are not contradicted either by Persian or Indian historians; though the latter find reasons for the defeat of their countrymen at Karnal, in the rashness of some of their leaders, and the caution of others; and they state, that even after the victory, the conqueror would have returned to Persia on receiving two millions sterling, if the disappointed ambition of an Indian omrah[k] had not urged him to advance to Delhi. But it is not necessary to seek after causes for the overthrow of an army, so panic-struck that they fled at the first charge, and nearly twenty thousand of whom were slain with hardly any loss to their enemies[l]; and our knowledge of Nâdir Shah forbids our believing a tale, which would make it appear, that the ultimate advantages from this great enterprise, and its unparalleled success, depended less upon his genius, than on the petty jealousies and intrigues of the captive ministers of the vanquished Mahomed Shah.

[i] A full translation of this remarkable letter will be found in the tenth volume of the Asiatic Researches.

[k] Saadut Khan, who had been taken prisoner, negotiated this agreement. He expected, as a reward, to be made prime minister; and when he heard that office was given to Nizam-ool-Moolk, he advised Nâdir Shah to advance, and obtain better terms.—SCOTT's *Translation of the History of the Deckan*, vol. ii. p. 204.

[l] Nâdir is said to have lost only five hundred men: this probably is below the number. Fraser, in his Life, states the loss of the Persians at two thousand five hundred killed; but this, from all other accounts, appears exaggerated.

The causes which led Nâdir to invade India have been already related; nor were they groundless. The court of Delhi had certainly not observed the established ties of friendship. It had given shelter to the Affghans who fled from the sword of the conqueror; and this protection was likely to enable them to make another effort for regaining their lost possessions, and thus to involve Persia in war. The ambassadors of Nâdir, who had been sent to make remonstrances on this subject, had not only been refused an answer, but were prevented from returning, in defiance of his reiterated and impatient applications. This proceeding, we are told, originated more in indecision, than from a spirit of hostility; but it undoubtedly furnished a fair pretext for Nâdir's advance. As to other motives which induced him to undertake this enterprise, we can conjecture none but an insatiable desire of plunder, a wish to exercise the military spirit he had kindled in the Persians, or the desire of annexing India to Persia. But if he ever cherished this project, he must have been led by a nearer view of India, to reject it as impracticable. We are, however, compelled to respect the greatness of that mind, which could resolve, at the very moment of its completion, on the entire abandonment of so great a conquest; he did not even try to establish a personal interest at the Court of Delhi, except through the operation of those sentiments which his generous conduct in replacing him upon his throne might make on the mind of Mahomed Shah [m].

[m] Nâdir, it is true, did not wholly abstain from adding to his possessions; but the provinces he reclaimed had before belonged to Persia. Mahomed Shah ceded the countries beyond the Indus, which was made the boundary between the two empires. The following translation of the treaty by which this cession was made, has been preserved by a cotemporary writer. It is an extraordinary paper, and was no doubt dictated by the conqueror:—

"Formerly the ministers of his high majesty (who is exalted like Saturn, fierce as Mars, impetuous as the god of war, king of the kings of the earth, prince of the princes of the age, the shadow of God and refuge of Islam, in pomp like Alexander, the heavens his court, the sultan who is merciful, and the emperor who is august, Nâdir Shah, may God perpetuate his reign,)

Nâdir claimed as his prize the wealth of the emperor, and a great portion of that of his richest nobles and subjects.

had sent ambassadors to this court, to treat of certain affairs, which I intended to comply with: afterwards Mahomed Khan Turkuman arrived from Candahar, to remind me thereof; but my ministers and agents having delayed the ambassadors, and postponed an answer to his majesty's letter, raised such a misunderstanding between us, that his successful army, having come to the confines of Hindustan, both parties encountered in the fields of Karnal; where, after a royal battle was fought, as Providence would have it, victory, to appearance, rose from the east of his undeclining fortune. As his high majesty, who is mighty as Jemsheed, and the greatest of the Turkumans, is the source of goodness and prowess, relying on his honour, and trusting to his support, I had the satisfaction of an interview, and enjoyed the pleasure of being entertained in his paradise-like company. After which, we came together to Shahjehanabad, where I brought forth to his view, and with the proper ceremony presented to him, all the treasure, jewels, and precious effects of the Hindustan emperor. His majesty, in compliance with my request, accepted of some; and out of the greatness of his soul, and abundant humanity, in regard to the illustrious family of Gurgan, and the honour of the original tree of Turkan, was graciously pleased to restore to me the crown and gem of Hindustan.

"In consideration of this favor, which no father shows to a son, nor no brother to a brother, I make over to him all the countries to the west of the River Attock, the water of Scind, and Nala Sunkra, which is a branch of the water of Scind: that is to say, Paishawur with its territories, the principality of Cabool, Ghuznavi, the mountainous residences of the Affghans, the Hazarijat and the passes, with the castles of Buckar, Sunkar, and Khudâdâd: the rest of the territories, passes, and abodes of the Chokias, Balochees, &c., with the province of Tatta, the castle of Ram, and the village of Terbin, the towns of Chun, Sumawaly, and Ketra, &c., places dependent on Tatta: all their fields, villages, castles, towns, and ports, from the first rise of the River Attock, with all the passes and habitations which the abovesaid water and its several branches comprehend and surround, as far as Nala Sunkra, where it empties itself into the sea. In short, all places westward of the River Attock, and those parts, and westward of the River Scind, and Nala Sunkra, I have annexed to the dominions of that powerful sovereign; and, from henceforth, his agents and servants may enter upon and set about the management and the securing of the abovesaid territories, taking the government and command of those several places, tribes, and inhabitants into their own hands; my officers, servants, &c., evacuating the abovesaid places, as being severed from my dominions, and renouncing all right they have or might formerly have had to command, control, or collect any revenues there: the castle and town of Lohry Bunder, with all the countries to the east of the River Attock, water of Scind, and Nala Sunkra,

All the jewels collected by a long race of sovereigns, and the whole contents of the imperial treasury, were made over to the conqueror. The principal nobles, imitating their monarch, gave up all their money and valuables. After these voluntary gifts (as they were termed,) had been received, arrears of revenue were demanded from distant provinces [n], and heavy impositions were laid on the richest inhabitants of Delhi. The great misery caused by these impositions was augmented by the Indian agents employed farming the right of extortion in the different quarters of the city, to wretches who made immense fortunes by the inhuman speculation [o]; and who collected, for every ten thousand rupees they paid to Nâdir, forty and fifty thousand from the unhappy inhabitants: numbers perished under blows inflicted to make them reveal their wealth; while others, among whom were several Hindus of high rank, became their own executioners, rather than bear the insults they were exposed to, or survive the loss of that property which they valued more than their existence [p].

The approach of Nâdir Shah to Delhi had filled the inhabitants with dread; but the strict discipline which his troops observed on their first arrival, restored confidence to all. This, however, was of short duration. The monarch himself occupied a palace in the city, and had sent some troops

shall, as formerly, belong to the empire of Hindustan. Dated at Shahjehanabad, the fourth of Mohurrum, 1152."—FRASER'S *History of Nâdir Shah*, p. 223.

[n] We are informed by a respectable author, that " a very short time after Serferaz Khan had taken possession of the government (of Bengal), and before he was confirmed in it, a messenger, sent by the vizier, Kummer-addeen Khan, announced the arrival of Nâdir Shah at Delhi, and demanded the revenues of the three last years. Serferaz Khan, by the advice of Hajee Ahmed, and the other two counsellors, not only paid the money, but actually ordered coin to be struck, and the Khootbeh to be read from the pulpits, in the name of Nâdir Shah.—STEWART'S *History of Bengal*, p. 434.

[o] Scott's Translation of the History of Deckan, vol. ii. p. 211.

[p] Among the higher classes of Hindus, suicide to prevent disgrace is very common. From their frugal habits, they have little apparent use for money, and they are yet devotedly fond of it.

to different quarters of it to maintain tranquillity, and to protect the inhabitants from insult or injury[q]. He entered the capital on the 8th of March, and on that and the two succeeding days all was quiet; but on the night of the 10th it was reported that Nâdir was dead. This report, first circulated by some designing persons, instantly spread, and a thoughtless mob made a furious assault on the Persians, who were scattered about the town as safeguards. Being divided in small parties, and quite unsuspicious of attack, they were almost all murdered; and we must cease to pity the nobles of Delhi, when assured by concurring authorities, that most of those, at whose palaces troops were stationed for their protection, gave them up without effort to the fury of the populace, and even in some instances assisted in their destruction[r].

Nâdir, when he first head of this tumult, sent several persons to explain to the populace their delusion and their danger; but his messengers were slain. He remained with all the Persians he could assemble in his palace till the day dawned, when he mounted his horse, and rode forth to endeavour, by his presence, to quell the tumult[s]. But his moderation only inflamed those whom (even Indian historians inform us) it was his desire to spare[t]; and he at last gave his troops, who had arrived from their camp near the city, orders for a general massacre. He was too well obeyed: the populace, when the Persians began to act, lost all their courage; and, from sun-rise till noon, Delhi presented a scene of shocking carnage, the horrors being increased by

[q] Orders were issued by Nâdir, that if any of his troops should insult an Indian, the nose and ears of the offender should instantly be cut off.—FRASER'S *Life of Nâdir Shah*, p. 179.

[r] Scott's Translation of the History of the Deckan, vol. ii. p. 207.

[s] Scott's Translation of the History of the Deckan, vol. ii. p. 207.

[t] All authors agree in this fact. Fraser, who was a cotemporary, and writes from a journal kept on the scene, says, that a shot was fired at Nâdir himself, which missed him, but killed one of his principal officers, and that het hen gave loose to his indignation.

the flames which now spread to almost every quarter of the city.

Nâdir, after issuing the fatal orders, went into the small mosque of Roshun-ood-douleh, near the centre of the city, and remained there in a deep and silent gloom which none dared to disturb. At last the unhappy Mahomed Shah, attended by two of his ministers, rushed into his presence, exclaiming, "Spare my people!" Nâdir replied, "The Emperor of India must never ask in vain:" and he commanded that the massacre should cease[w]. The prompt obedience given to this command is remarked by all his historians, as the strongest proof of the strict discipline he had introduced.

The number of persons slain on this occasion has been differently estimated, and from the nature of the scene, it could not be correctly ascertained. An author[x], who has been often referred to, conjectures that about a hundred and twenty thousand perished; while another European writer[y] nearly doubles this amount. But a respectable Indian historian[z] reduces the number to eight thousand: and there is reason to conclude that his statement is nearest the truth. Two nobles, who were supposed to have caused the riot, fled, with conscious guilt, to a small fortress near Delhi. They were pursued, taken, and put to death, with those who were deemed their accomplices, amounting to about four hundred persons.

A very few days after these events, a marriage was celebrated between the second son of Nâdir and a princess of the imperial house of Timoor; and the festivities that attended the nuptials gave a colouring of joy to scenes which abounded with misery: but the majority of the inhabitants of Delhi appear to have been of a light and dissolute cha-

[w] Fraser's History of Nâdir Shah, p. 184.
[x] Fraser's History of Nâdir Shah, p. 185.
[y] Otther.
[z] Scott's Translation of the History of the Deckan, vol. ii. p. 207.

racter. We are, indeed, told by an Indian author[a] that numbers regretted the departure of the Persians. But the drolls and players of the capital began, immediately after, to amuse their countrymen with a ludicrous representation of their own disgrace; and the fierce looks and savage pride of their conquerors, which had so lately been their dread, became in these imitations one of their chief sources of entertainment.

Nâdir remained at Delhi fifty-eight days. Before he quitted it, he had a long and secret conference with Mahomed Shah, in which it is supposed he gave him such counsel as he deemed best for preserving that power to which he was restored. To all the nobles of the court he spoke publicly, and warned them to maintain their allegiance to their emperor, as they valued his favour, or dreaded his resentment. To those who were absent he wrote in similar terms: he informed them, that he was so united in friendship with Mahomed Shah, that they might be esteemed to have one soul in two bodies; and, after desiring them to walk in the path of duty to the house of Timoor, he concluded these circular letters in the following words: "May God forbid! but if accounts of your rebelling against your emperor should reach our ears, we will blot you out of the book of creation."

The conqueror had behaved with considerable moderation and kindness towards the chief omrahs of the court of Delhi; but he must have despised their luxurious effeminacy. We learn his sentiments from a remarkable anecdote. When speaking one day to Kummer-addeen, who was then vizier, he asked how many ladies he had[b]? "Eight hundred and fifty," was the reply.—"Let a hundred and fifty of our female captives," said Nâdir, "be sent to the vizier, who will

[a] Scott's Translation of the History of the Deckan, vol. ii. p. 214.

[b] A chief of the tribe of Affshâr informed me, that his father (who was one of Nâdir's generals) used often to praise his great continence, saying, he never had more than two wives with him when in the field, and was displeased with any leader who had more than one.

then be entitled to the high military rank of a Mim-bâshee, or 'commander of a thousand[c].'"

The march of Nâdir from India was literally encumbered with spoil. The amount of the plunder he carried from that country has been estimated variously. The highest calculation makes it upwards of seventy millions sterling; the lowest is considerably more than thirty. A great part was in precious stones, of which he was immoderately fond. When on his march from India, he was informed that several of the most valuable crown jewels had been secreted by some of his followers. He made this a pretext for searching the baggage of every man in his army, and appropriating all the jewels that were found. The soldiers murmured[d], but submitted; and their not resisting is an extraordinary proof of the subordination he had established. He was, however, in general kind and liberal to his troops: he had given to each man a gratuity of three months' pay at the fall of Candahar[e]; he gave them as much more after the victory of Karnal; and they received a still greater bounty before he marched from Delhi.

The troops of Nâdir, we are told, suffered much in their return from the intense heat. Their passage over the rivers of the Punjaub and the Indus was delayed by accidents to the temporary bridges which he had constructed, and in one instance by the threatened attack of the mountaineers of Cabool, whose forbearance the proud conqueror did not disdain to purchase[f]; and when we consider the nature of the country he had to pass through, his immense train of bag-

[c] Persian MS.

[d] Hanway, who records the particulars of this occurrence, says, some of the soldiers were so enraged, that they threw their jewels into the Indus, on the banks of which they were encamped, rather than deliver them to the officers appointed to search.—HANWAY, vol. ii. p. 392.

I have heard many Persian noblemen, when speaking on this subject, refer the conduct of Nâdir more to policy than avarice. He feared, they affirmed, his soldiers would be spoiled by wealth.

[e] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v.

[f] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 392.

gage, and the danger that might have arisen from the slightest confusion, we cannot blame the prudence with which he acted.

The greatest expectation was excited in Persia at the prospect of their victorious monarch's return. The Persians had already felt the benefit of his triumphs. He had commanded that all taxes should be remitted for three years; and they began to anticipate scenes of unheard-of joy and abundance. The most exaggerated reports were circulated of the vast riches which their sovereign and his soldiers had acquired; and all conceived that Nâdir was disposed to enjoy himself, from the number of artificers and musicians whom he brought from India. Curiosity too was eager to behold the train of elephants which attended his march. That noble animal had become a stranger to the plains of Persia; and the natives of that country were only familiar with its shape, from seeing its figure in the sculptures of ancient times. Sanguine minds were led, by a natural association, to believe that their present ruler was the destined restorer of their country to its former glory; and the conqueror was hailed, at his return, as a hero, whose fame had eclipsed that of a Sapor, or a Noosheerwan.

The soldiers, we are informed, after the expedition to India, were anxious for repose; but Nâdir knew too well the consequences of this indulgence to permit them to enjoy it. After he passed the Indus, he had led them through the deserts of Scind to attack a feudatory chief, who had established himself in the government of that province[g]. This

[g] I find the following account of this transaction in a Memoir, transmitted by Mr. N. H. Smith, late envoy from the supreme government of India to the ruler of Scind.

" In the reign of Mahomed Shah, when the alarm excited by the threatened invasion of India by Nâdir Shah had become general, Meer Noor Mahomed Ubassee Caloree, whose hereditary possessions consisted of the province of Sewee, also called Seree, and other districts, and who not only exercised the functions of executive power in those provinces, but possessed a spiritual authority over several military chiefs, who considered themselves bound to pay him obedience on the ground of the sanctity of his family,

prince had courted Nâdir Shah when he first threatened the invasion of India, deeming such a measure favorable to his views of independence; but when his possessions were made over to Persia, he changed his policy; and, lodging all his treasure and property in the fortress of Amerkote[h], made a feeble attempt at opposition; but his capital was taken and plundered, and he was compelled to surrender himself to the conqueror; who, however, satisfied with his submission, and the possession of his wealth, restored him to his government, on his agreeing henceforward to hold it as a tributary to the crown of Persia.

After this expedition, Nâdir marched to Herat[i], where he made a proud display of his jewels and spoils; among which, the most remarkable was the celebrated throne of the Emperor of Delhi[k], made in the shape of a peacock, and ornamented with precious stones of every description. This

availed himself of the apprehensions of Sadiq Ulee Khan, the Soobadar of Scind, on the part of Mahomed Shah, respecting the attempts of Nâdir Shah to persuade that officer, in the 1150th year of the Hijrah, to transfer the government of Scind to him for the sum of three lacks of rupees, part of which sum has remained unpaid to the present day. Nâdir Shah, having in the year 1152 of the Hijrah defeated the Caloree army, compelled the chiefs of the family to take refuge in Amerkote, a fort situated in the desert. An arrangement, however, was ultimately made, by which the Calorees were permitted by the conqueror to retain the government of Scind, on condition of paying a yearly tribute to the sovereigns of Persia; and this appears to have been regularly paid by the first of these princes. After the death of Meer Noor Mahomed Caloree, which took place in the year 1185 of the Hijrah, eight princes of the Caloree family, in regular succession, reigned in Scind, until the year 1197 of the Hijrah, when Meer Futteh Ulee Talpooree effected the expulsion of Ubdool Nubee, the last of the Caloree princes, and established the present dynasty of that country."—Mr. Smith's *MS.*

[h] This town, which is in the province of Scind, is situated in 26° 23′ north latitude, and in 116° 25′ east longitude. It at present acknowledges the authority of the Hindu Rajah of Joudpore. This city derives its fame from being the birth-place of Ackbar. His father, Hoomâyoon, when he fled from India, first took refuge with the Rajah of Amerkote; and his celebrated son was born there in the year 1541.

[i] He entered that city on the 26th of May, 1740.

[k] We are told, that Nâdir was so fond of this throne, that he had an exact duplicate of it made of other jewels.

gorgeous exhibition took place on the 4th of June; and on that day, and several others, the court, army, and populace, were amused with pageants, shows, and entertainments of every kind: but Nâdir, though satisfied that this public triumph was calculated to raise his fame with his subjects, and to gratify the vanity of his soldiers, appears always to have dreaded inaction. He moved his army from Herat; and after meeting his son, Rizâ Kooli, and bestowing valuable presents on him and on the other princes of his family, he moved towards Bulkh, where he had ordered preparations to be made for crossing the Oxus, to punish the sovereign of Bokhara, who, unmindful of his alliance, had taken advantage of Nâdir's absence in India to make inroads into Khorassan.

The motives which induced Nâdir to proceed on this expedition were soon apparent. He had no desire to extend his empire in a direction where he knew it could not be maintained; but he wished to avenge on the inhabitants of this part of Tartary the calamities which they were in the annual habit of inflicting on the frontier provinces of Persia. Abool Fyze Khan, the ruler of the Oosbegs at this period, boasted a lineal descent from Chenghiz: but he inherited not the spirit of his great ancestor. He was terrified into submission at the approach of Nâdir, and sent his vizier to deprecate his wrath. The minister was well received; but told, that his master must surrender immediately, if he desired to save himself from destruction, and his country from ruin[l]. During these negotiations, the Persian army advanced, by rapid marches, to Bokhara[m]; and on the 23d of August, five days after they had crossed the Oxus, encamped within twelve miles of that capital, where this short expedition was brought to a close by the personal submission of Abool Fyze Khan: attended by all his court, he

[l] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 328.

[m] This city is not more than fifty miles from the Oxus: but Nâdir had crossed above the place where it approaches nearest to Bokhara.

proceeded to the tents of Nâdir Shah, and laid his crown and other ensigns of royalty at the feet of the conqueror, who assigned to him an honorable place in the assembly; and a few days afterwards restored him to his throne, on condition that the Oxus should remain, as in former periods, the boundary of the two empires. This treaty was cemented by an alliance between the daughter of the ruler of Bokhara and the nephew of his conqueror; and, after its conclusion, a great number of Tartars, with the concurrence of their own monarch, were enrolled in the Persian army, whose commander probably esteemed the services of these hardy warriors as of more consequence to the peace of his own dominions, and to the fulfilment of his future views of ambition, than all the wealth he had brought from India.

The arms of Nâdir were next directed against the kingdom of Khaurizm, situated to the westward of Bokhara, and stretching along both banks of the Oxus, to the shores of the Caspian. The prince of this country (whose name was Ilburz) neither merited nor received such humane treatment as Abool Fyze Khan. He had committed frequent depredations on the Persian territories; and, conceiving that the strength of his fortresses would secure him, he resolved on resistance. The King of Bokhara had sent a mission advising him to submit: he not only treated this friendly counsel with disdain, but in violation of laws which the most savage nations respect, slew those by whom it was conveyed. This conduct greatly irritated Nâdir, who, after he had defeated his army and made him prisoner, doomed him, and twenty of his chief officers, to death[a]. The possessions of Ilburz were bestowed on Taher Khan, a cousin of the sovereign of Bokhara, and consequently a direct descendant of the celebrated Chenghiz[•].

When the winter of this year was far advanced, Nâdir

[a] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 335.

[•] Meerza Mehdee, in his History of Nâdir, calls this chief Taher Khan Nevadi Genghizi.—Sir William Jones's *Works*, vol. v. p. 335.

marched to Kelât[p], to which place he continued from his earliest years to be much attached. He had directed that its fortifications should be improved; that a palace should be built; and that aqueducts should be constructed to improve the fertility of its fields. He had also ordered, that all his treasures should be carried thither: and a peaceful retirement to this cherished spot, after the toils and dangers of war were at an end, was the most innocent of those dreams which amused the fancy of this most indefatigable conqueror.

After a short residence at Kelât, Nâdir proceeded to Meshed, which he had made the capital of his empire; and, during three months that he remained there, his time was passed in constant festivities. Five[q] monarchs had been subdued in five years. The empire of Persia had not only been rescued from a foreign yoke, but its limits had been extended as far as the Oxus to the north, and the Indus to the east; and the hero, by whom all this had been accomplished, promised his exulting subjects that the Turks should soon be driven from the banks of the Tigris and Eu-

[p] "Kelât is about a degree north of Meshed, on the road to Merv-i-Shah Jehan, and is situated in a very mountainous country, named Ashdar Koh, or 'the Mountains of the Dragon.' It is a very high hill, accessible only by two narrow paths. After an ascent of about seven miles, you reach a fine plain, nearly twelve miles in circuit, watered by a multitude of little streams, and producing corn and rice in the greatest abundance. The inhabitants of the mountains live in tents; and the only buildings in this delightful valley are two towers, and a small marble edifice erected by Nâdir. The towers were intended for the defence of the paths, and the house for the use of his majesty. On quitting the valley, you continue to ascend; and, after travelling about fifteen miles, gain the summit of the mountain, on which is another plain, not so large, but equal in fertility to the former. Here are also two small towers, which command the approaches, and are the only fortifications on the Castle of Kelât; the strength of which, like the Kela Sufeed, consists in the steepness of the rock, and in the difficulty of access to it. A single stone, hurled from the top, is sufficient to stop the advance, if not to effect the destruction, of an enemy."—KINNIER's *Memoir of Persia*, p. 176.

[q] The two Affghan princes, Ashrâff and Hoossein; Mahomed Shah, Emperor of India; Abool Fyze, King of Bokharah; and Ilburz, ruler of Khaurizm.

phrates: but honour required that, before any other expedition was undertaken, Nâdir should revenge the blood of his brother, Ibrahim Khan[r], who had been slain in an attack of the Lesghees.

When the army was on its march to Dâghestan, an event occurred which cast a dark cloud over all the fair prospects then dawning upon Persia, and exhibited, in the strongest view, the miserable condition of those empires whose fate hangs upon the disposition and talents of a despotic sovereign. An advanced corps, chiefly composed of Affghans, by their extraordinary valour had gained great advantages over the Lesghees; and Nâdir was hastening by way of Mazenderan to their support, when, on his march through one of the forests in that country, a ball from an assassin, who had concealed himself behind a tree, wounded him in the hand, and killed his horse. The prince, Rizâ Kooli, who was near him, galloped towards the spot from which the shot had been fired; but neither his efforts, nor those of the guards that aided him, could seize the fugitive, who, favored by the thickness of the wood, effected his escape. He was afterwards taken; and the historian[s] of Nâdir asserts, that he was employed by the chief[t] of a barbarous tribe, who cherished a secret resentment against the conqueror.

This accident, though it made an indelible impression on the mind of Nâdir, did not prevent his proceeding to attack the Lesghees: but he never engaged in an enterprise of more hazard. These mountaineers defended themselves with desperate bravery: and the rugged nature of the country of Dâghestan, which they inhabit, made it almost impossible to subdue them. The bravest troops in the Persian

[r] Ibrahim Khan was an active and brave man. He enjoyed the full confidence of his brother; and his sons, after his death, were considered as princes of the empire.

[s] Meerza Mehdee.

[t] Meerza Mehdee, the historian of Nâdir, states, that the name of this person was Aga Meerza, the son of Delavur, the chief of the tribe of Taimni. The assassin's name was Neek-kuddum, who, he asserts, confessed his crime, and therefore only lost his eyes.

army were worn out with the fatigue of this harassing war: and the preparations which the Russians began to make at Astracan, though dictated by the fear that Nâdir meant to invade their country after subduing the Lesghees[u], gave the latter every encouragement to persevere in their resistance; and the Persian monarch was compelled to retire with very partial success, and very great loss.

Nâdir, from the very day on which his life was attempted, had entertained suspicions of his eldest son, Rizâ Kooli.

[u] We meet with the following observations of Hanway on this subject:—

"The Lesghees had intimated their desire of putting themselves under the protection of Russia, from the time of Nâdir's first invading their country: and it certainly was the interest of that empire to support the independency of those brave mountaineers, who form so safe a barrier against the Persians. The arrival of the Russian troops, indeed, contributed to defeat Nâdir's designs; and he found himself obliged to abandon an enterprise to which his skill and fortune were not equal.

"As soon as the Russian general arrived in the neighbourhood of Dâghestan, the Lesghees made application to him; and from an apprehension of the danger they might be exposed to, in case Nâdir was determined to prosecute his design of reducing them, they wrote to this commander as follows:—

"Most honored and most accomplished general and commander in chief.

"Our most humble petition consists in this: all the inhabitants of Dâghestan having been informed that you are arrived near the frontiers of Kislar with an imperial army, and that your intention is to defend and protect the subjects of her imperial majesty in Andrewska, Koalkoff, and Baxan, as also all the chiefs and rulers of the states bordering on the dominions of her imperial majesty, after longing expectations of your arrival, we have sent our deputies in the name of the whole nation to desire your intercession, that her imperial majesty may receive us under her puissant protection, and permit us to be her slaves. We are determined to hold the golden border of her imperial robes, and, in spite of all the evils that may threaten us, we will not be dragged from them, nor seek any other protection, nor acknowledge any other sovereign than God and her imperial majesty.

"We hereby take a solemn oath of allegiance to her imperial majesty, whom we most humbly implore to protect us against our enemies, and in her exalted clemency to give a favorable answer to our petition. And that her puissant majesty may know in what numbers our troops consist, we send you a list as follows."—Hanway, vol. ii. p. 401.

They transmitted, with this letter, a summary of the forces that the different chiefs could raise, which amounted to sixty-six thousand: but this account of their strength must have been exaggerated.

He summoned him to his presence. The prince obeyed: on his arrival he was made prisoner, and deprived of sight. A respectable European writer[x], who went to Persia two years after this event, appears satisfied that the assassin who fired at Nadir in the woods of Mazenderan was employed by Rizâ Kooli; who, he informs us, though brave and able, was violent and oppressive. According to this author, on hearing that Nâdir was dead, during his expedition to India, his son declared himself king; and at the same time, put to death the unfortunate Shah Tâmâsp[y], who was confined at Subzâwar, in Khorassan. The same writer assures us, that Nâdir, though convinced of his son's guilt, addressed him in the mildest and most humane terms, and offered him complete pardon if he would only confess his crime and promise repentance; but that the fierce youth rejected this offer, said he gloried in the attempt he had made to rid the world of a tyrant, and provoked his fate by the coarsest abuse of his father and sovereign. It is probable that this author received the account he has given of this transaction from some person desirous of palliating the guilt of a reigning tyrant: we are compelled to disbelieve it. The flattering historian of Nâdir expressly informs us, that he was deluded by the gross misrepresentations of infamous men into the commission of this great crime[z]. The European physician[a], who attended him during the latter years of his life, asserts the innocence of Rizâ Kooli. He adds, that Nâdir was so penetrated with remorse the moment after the deed of horror was done, that he vented his fury on all around him: fifty noblemen, who had witnessed the dreadful act, were put to death, on the pretext that they should have offered their lives as sacrifices, to save the eyes of a

[x] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 339.

[y] Shah Tâmâsp was put to death by Rizâ Kooli, as Hanway mentions; but it has been conjectured that it was by the command of Nâdir.

[z] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 398.

[a] The monk Bazin joined Nâdir Shah at Derbund, in 1741, and remained with him as physician till 1747, the year in which he was murdered.

prince who was the glory of his country[b]. It is also to be remarked, that the traditional impressions about a fact comparatively recent, are all against Nâdir, who is believed to have had no evidence of his son's guilt but his own suspicions. From the day when his life had been attempted in Mazenderan, he had become gloomy and irritable. His bad success against the Lesghees had increased the natural violence of his temper, and, listening to the enemies of Rizâ Kooli[c], in a moment of rage he ordered him to be blinded. "Your crimes have forced me to this dreadful measure," was, we are told, the speech that Nâdir made to his son. "It is not my eyes that you have put out," replied Rizâ Kooli, "but those of Persia[d]." The prophetic truth of this answer sunk deep into his father's soul, and we may believe his historian, who affirms, that he never afterwards knew happiness, nor desired that others should enjoy it. All his future actions were deeds of horror, except the contest which he carried on against the Turks for three years; and even in that he displayed none of the energy and heroic spirit which marked his former wars.

The Persian army had made unsuccessful efforts to reduce the cities of Bussorah, of Bagdad, and of Moossul. Nâdir marched, early in the succeeding year, to meet a large Turkish force which had advanced near Erivân: and we are told, that he desired to encounter his enemies in battle on the same plain where, ten years before, he had acquired such renown: but their general, subdued by his own fears, fled, and was massacred by his soldiers; who, thrown into confusion by this event, were easily routed by the Persians. This was the last victory of Nâdir[e], and it was gained merely by the terror of his name. Sensible of his own con-

[b] Lettres Edifiantes, vol. iv. p. 294.

[c] I have conversed with the descendants of several of Nâdir's chief omrahs, who all concurred in the truth of Meerza Mehdee's statement.

[d] Persian MSS.

[e] His son, Naser-ollâ, defeated, about the same period, an army of Turks near Diarbekir.

dition, he hastened to make peace. His claim to the establishment of a fifth sect among orthodox Mahomedans, and the erection of a fifth pillar in the mosque at Mecca, were abandoned. It was agreed, that prisoners on both sides should be released; that Persian pilgrims going to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina should be protected; and that the whole provinces of Irak and Aderbejan should remain with Persia, except an inconsiderable territory, which had belonged to the Turkish government in the time of Shah Ismael, the first Seffavean king.

The conduct of Nâdir to his own subjects during the last five years of his reign has been described (even by a partial historian) as exceeding in barbarity all that has been recorded of the most bloody tyrants[f]. The acquisition of the wealth of India had at first filled his mind with generous and patriotic feelings. He had proclaimed that no taxes should be collected for three years. But the possession of riches had soon its usual effect of creating a desire for more: and while his vast treasures were hoarded in the fort of Kelât, which, with all the fears of a despot, he continually laboured to render inaccessible, he not only paid his armies, but added to his golden heaps from the arrears of remitted revenue, extorted with inflexible rigour.

Nâdir knew that his attack on the religion of his country had made him unpopular, and that the priests, whom he peculiarly oppressed, endeavoured to spread disaffection. This led him to suspect those who still adhered to the tenets of the Sheahs; in other words, almost all the natives of Persia. The troops on whom he placed most reliance, were the Affghans and Tartars, who were of the Soonee persuasion. Their leaders were his principal favorites; and every pretext was taken to put to death such Persian chiefs as possessed either influence or power. These proceedings had the natural effect of producing rebellion in every quarter[g]; and the spirit of insurrection which now displayed

[f] Meerza Mehdee's History. Sir William Jones's Works, vol. v. p. 399

[g] Fars, Shirwan, and Mazenderan, were all, at one period, in rebellion.

itself among his subjects, changed the violence of Nâdir into outrageous fury. His murders were no longer confined to individuals: the inhabitants of whole cities were massacred; and men, to use the words of his historian [h], left their abodes, and took up their habitations in caverns and deserts, in the hope of escaping from his savage ferocity. We are told [i], and the events which preceded render the tale not improbable, that, when on his march to subdue one of his nephews [k] who had rebelled in Seestan, he proposed to put to death every Persian in his army. There can be little doubt that his mind was at this time in a state of phrensy which amounted to insanity. Some of the principal officers of his court, who learnt that their names were in the list of proscribed victims [l], resolved to save themselves by the assassination of Nâdir. The execution of the plot was committed to four persons, among whom was Mahomed Kooli Khan, a chief of his own tribe of Affshâr, and Sâlâh Beg, the captain of his guards. These chiefs took advantage of their stations, and, under the pretext of urgent business, rushed past the guards into the inner tent, where the tyrant was asleep. The noise awoke him; and he had slain two of the meaner assassins, when a blow from Sâlâh Beg deprived him of life.

The character of this extraordinary man will be best understood from a short review of his principal actions. Born in a low rank, he appears to have owed the distinction which he early obtained among his rude associates, to his uncommon bodily strength, his determined courage, and a strong natural sense, which, though afterwards improved by experience, was never cultivated by education. The wretched condition of his native country was calculated to excite in his

[h] Meerza Mehdee.

[i] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 433.

[k] Ali Kooli Khan.

[l] The physician Bazin states, that Nâdir had informed the chief of the Affghans that he entirely reposed on the fidelity of his corps, and that he meant they should next day seize and imprison all the officers of his guards. —*Lettres Edifiantes*, vol. iv. p. 313.

ardent mind the noblest ambition: and when we reflect on the success which attended his first efforts against the Affghans, we are almost reconciled to his usurping the name of that sovereignty, the substance of which he had long enjoyed, and which he could not have resigned without extreme danger, both to himself and to a nation that had been saved by his valour and his genius.

After expelling the barbarous invaders from the central provinces of Persia, and after obtaining the most signal victories over the Turks, his next labour was to restore the throne to its former glory: and when he had conquered Candahar and Cabool, he sought (and with success) to add to the strength of his empire, by converting the most dangerous of her enemies into the bravest of her defenders. The causes of his expedition to India have been explained; and, though it brought misery to thousands, perhaps there never was a conquest of such magnitude made by an Asiatic prince, with less crime in the conqueror. The riches and renown which he obtained by this enterprise, gave him great means of restoring Persia to her ancient splendour; and his invasion of Bokhara, while it was the best, and indeed the only way to secure the continued tranquillity of his own possessions, added, perhaps, still more to his fame and power. His generous treatment of the humbled monarch of that country, and his conduct to the Emperor of India, showed that Nâdir desired to trust more to the impression of his arms, than to the extent of his dominions, for the future security of his power.

Hitherto this monarch, whether we consider the noble and patriotic object which first stimulated his ambition, the valour and ability he displayed, the comparative moderation with which he used success, or the glorious deeds he performed, is entitled to great, if not unqualified, admiration. The dreadful change which took place in his disposition and character has been narrated. From the time when his mind was subdued by avarice and suspicion, he became one of the most cruel of tyrants: and Persia, by a

strange destiny, seemed doomed to receive her death from that hand, to which, a few years before, she had owed her existence.)

When the mind of Nâdir was in its most disturbed and phrensied state, he continued to brood over those plans which he had cherished in his happier days. He anxiously desired to encourage trade; and thought that his country would not only become wealthier, but more powerful, if he could form a navy. The aid of an enterprising, but indiscreet Englishman[m], enabled him to commence the execution of this project on the Caspian; but the effort produced no benefit to Persia; and, by exciting the jealousy of Russia, proved destructive to an infant commerce, which British merchants had established in that quarter. Nâdir had also ordered ships to be built on the shores of the Persian Gulf; and, with the true spirit of an unreflecting despot, commanded that timber for that purpose should be conveyed from the forests of Mazenderan, a distance of more than six hundred miles, and through a country which had neither canals, roads, nor wheel carriages. The inhabitants of the intervening provinces were compelled to contribute their labour to this object, which was never accomplished. The rude ribs of an ill-constructed vessel were to be seen some years ago on the beach at Abusheher, and seemed spared to be the memorial of the folly of this attempt[n].

We have a remarkable instance of the anxiety with which Nâdir desired to encourage commerce, in his conduct towards our countryman, Hanway, who visited his camp three years before his death, at a time when Persia was devas-

[m] The name of this person was Elton: for an account of his proceedings and their consequences, see the Works of Jonas Hanway.

[n] He also directed an immense quantity of marble to be carried from Aderbejan, to ornament his palaces at Kelât and Meshed, the transport of which caused almost as much misery as conveying the timber. In 1810 I visited the quarry where this marble was found, and saw a great number of half-finished blocks, which had lain untouched since his death. This quarry is on the banks of the Lake of Oormeah, and about eighteen miles from the town of Mârâgâ.

tated by his oppression and cruelty. The monarch commanded that all the losses which this eminent merchant had sustained by the rebellion at Asterabad, should be made good, either by the restoration of his merchandise*, or from the sale of the property of his plunderers.

It has been already stated, that Nâdir desired to change the religion of his country. His first idea, probably, was to destroy, with the tenets of the Sheah sect, the veneration and attachment of those who held them for the Seffavean dynasty, by whom this faith had first been established as the national religion. He also desired, as has been noticed, to do away religious distinctions, which seemed likely to interfere with his schemes of ambition. We have the strongest evidence to conclude, that his conduct on this point was wholly uninfluenced by other motives than those of policy. He appears, indeed, to have had no fixed religious sentiments.

Soon after his return from India, he directed that the four Evangelists should be translated into Persian; and when this work was finished in a very incorrect manner by some Romish and Armenian priests, who wrote under the

* A Persian MS. in my possession relates an anecdote of Nâdir at this period, which shows how he understood the feelings of the most ignorant and the wickedest of his subjects. A native merchant, travelling from Cabool, had been robbed in a plain near Nishapore, and carried his complaint to the sovereign. "Was there no one near but the robbers?" said Nâdir. "None," was the reply. "Were there no trees, or stones, or bushes?" "Yes," said the man, "there was one large solitary tree, under whose shade I was reposing when I was attacked." Nâdir, on hearing this, affected great fury, and ordered two executioners to proceed, and flog the tree every morning, till it either restored the lost property or revealed the names of the thieves. The mandate of a king of Persia is always law; that of Nâdir was as irrevocable as fate. The executioners went; and the tree had not suffered flagellation above a week, when all the stolen goods were found one morning at its root. The alarmed robbers, who soon heard of the extravagant severity which inflicted such blows on an inanimate substance, trembled at the thought of the horrible punishment that awaited them, if they were ever discovered. When the result was reported to Nâdir, he smiled, and said, "I knew what flogging that tree would produce."

superintendence of his secretary [p], he summoned some Christian priests, Jewish rabbies, and Mahomedan moollahs, to his presence [q]. Extracts from the imperfect translation of the New Testament were read to him, and he amused himself, and some of his hearers, with ludicrous remarks on the mysterious parts of the Christian faith. The tenets of the Jews, and the traditions of the Mahomedans, were treated with the same freedom; and the tyrant broke up the assembly with a declaration, that, if God spared him, he would make a religion much better than any which mankind yet possessed.

The Seffavean kings had established a powerful hierarchy in their dominions, at the head of which was a Sudder-ool-Suddoor, or chief pontiff. This body, who always possessed much wealth, had enjoyed not only a great share in the government, but of the revenues, under the weak and bigoted Shah Sultan Hoossein. The fate of that prince had brought popular indignation on every measure with which his memory was associated; and Nâdir, therefore, proceeded, without alarm, to plunder the ecclesiastics. Immediately after he was crowned, he assembled a number of the principal priests, and demanded of them in what manner the immense revenues [r] were appropriated. They replied, "in supporting priests, colleges, and mosques. In the latter, we continually offer up prayers to God for the success of our sovereigns."—"Your prayers," said Nâdir, "are evidently not acceptable to the Almighty, for the empire suffered its greatest decline when your order was most encouraged. It has been rescued from destruction by my brave soldiers, who are, therefore, to be deemed God's chosen instruments, and your wealth must henceforward be applied to their support."

[p] Meerza Mehdee, who was also the author of his history. Hanway tells us, that this translation, which was completed in six months, was dressed up with glosses and fables to make it agree with the koran.

[q] May 1741. Hanway, vol. ii. p. 404.

[r] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 343. Hanway calculates this amount at nearly one fifth of the revenue of the country, or about a million sterling.

At the same time that Nâdir seized almost the whole of the church revenue, he abolished the duties of the chief pontiff, but left the name, and gave the person who bore it a small pension. His conduct to the priesthood, though it excited no commotion at the moment, was, perhaps, one of the most impolitic acts that he ever committed. This order became the active disseminators of sedition; and, as the envy which their wealth had excited was soon changed into pity for their fallen condition, their efforts were very successful. Nâdir was well aware of their sentiments. On sending one of his nobles to take charge of a distant government, he concluded his instructions by saying, "Remember you are not to communicate with the moollah; but I know you will meet him at night, and talk of me. He will call me one of the greatest monarchs in the universe; but will add, that I am a villain, and that I have neither mercy nor justice in my composition [s]."

The contempt of Nâdir for the arts by which the dervishes, and other religious mendicants, imposed on the credulity of his countrymen, was shown on every occasion. Many believed that the holy Imâm Rezâ, who is interred at Meshed, continued to work miracles; and this belief gave rise to a number of impositions. Persons, pretending to be blind, went to his tomb; and, after a long period of prayer, opened their eyes, and declared that their sight had been restored by the holy Imâm. One of these was seated at the gate of the sacred mausoleum when Nâdir passed [t]. "How long have you been blind?" said the monarch. "Two years," answered the man. "A proof," replied Nâdir, "that you have no faith. If you had been a true believer you would have been cured long ago. Recollect, my friend, if I come back and find you as you now are, I will strike your head off." When Nâdir returned, the frightened fellow pretended to pray violently, and all at once found his sight. "A miracle! a

[s] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 446.
[t] Persian MSS.

miracle!" the populace exclaimed, and tore off his coat in small pieces, as relics. The monarch smiled, and observed, "that faith was every thing."

Nâdir, we are informed, was a predestinarian; and the Persians believe, that even in his phrensied moments, when he was destroying his fellow-creatures, he thought himself an instrument of Heaven. As a proof, they relate the following occurrence [u]. An arrow was shot into his quarters with a paper affixed to it, on which was written, "If thou art a king, cherish and protect thy people; if a prophet, show us the path of salvation; if a god, be merciful to thy creatures." The tyrant, while he made every search for the author, commanded that copies should be distributed through the camp, with the following answer. "I am neither a king, to protect my subjects; a prophet, to teach the way of salvation; nor a god, to exercise the attribute of mercy; but I am he, whom the Almighty has sent in his wrath, to chastise a world of sinners [x]."

The character of this wonderful man is, perhaps, exhibited in its truest colours in those impressions which the memory of his actions has left on the minds of his countrymen. They speak of him as a deliverer and a destroyer; but while they dwell with pride on his deeds of glory, they express more pity than horror for the cruel enormities which disgraced the latter years of his reign; and neither his crimes, nor his attempt to abolish their religion, have subdued their gratitude and veneration for the hero, who revived in the breasts of his degraded countrymen a sense of their former fame, and who restored Persia to independence.

The morning after the murder of Nâdir presented a scene of the greatest confusion. Ahmed Khan [y], a chief of the Abdâllee tribe of Affghans, supported by a corps of Oosbegs, made an attack on the Persian troops, but was repulsed.

[u] Persian MSS.

[x] Hanway also relates this occurrence. Vol. ii. p. 442.

[y] According to some authors, Ahmed Khan was attacked by the Persians.

He left the army; and proceeding by rapid marches to Candahar, not only obtained possession of that city, but took a large convoy of treasure coming from Cabool and Scind to the Persian camp. With these means he laid the foundation of a kingdom, which soon became formidable to surrounding nations. The chiefs who had murdered Nâdir agreed to place his nephew Ali, then at the head of a force in Seestan, upon the vacant throne. This prince hastened to join them; and was hailed as sovereign of Persia the moment he arrived. His first act was to circulate a proclamation[1], declaring, that those who had slain his uncle had acted by his order. This extraordinary document, which was meant to give security to the conspirators, deserves attention, as it shows what impressions had been made on all ranks by the horrid cruelties of Nâdir. His favorite nephew, who owed every thing to his bounty, appeals to the Persians to support him on the throne, on the ground of his merit in having destroyed a despot; who, to use the words of the proclamation, "delighted in blood, and with unheard-of barbarity made pyramids of the heads of his own subjects." "We commanded," this prince observes, "that Mahomed Kooli Khan should prevail on the Affshâr guards to seize and remove the tyrant; thus performing a service highly beneficial to the public welfare, and restoring rest and tranquillity to the nation[2]."

The same proclamation informed his subjects that Ali had marched to Meshed, where he had listened to the unanimous voice of the principal officers in the army, and of the inhabitants of the city, who entreated him to ascend the throne, "that he might relieve the miseries, and repair the desolations of his country." He concluded by stating, that in consideration of the dreadful extortions and cruelties of his predecessor, and desiring to appease the wrath of

[1] All Persians agree in their account of the causes which led to the death of Nâdir; and there is no doubt this declaration of Ali's was only meant to screen the murderers from future imputation and danger.

[2] Hanway, vol. ii. p. 451.

Heaven, he remitted the revenues of the current year, and all extraordinary taxes for the two following.

While Ali, who took the name of Adil Shah, or "the just king," was, by his professions, endeavouring to obtain popularity, his actions showed that he was at once weak and cruel. A party of his troops had succeeded in taking by surprise the fortress of Kelât, which contained all the treasures of Nâdir. The princes, Naser-ollâh, Imâm Kooli, and Shah Rokh, were at Kelât when the troops entered. They fled, but were pursued and taken. The two former were put to death, as were also the unfortunate Riza Kooli, and thirteen of Nâdir's sons and grandsons. The only descendant of the conqueror who was spared, was his grandson, Shah Rokh, then fourteen years of age. We are informed, that the life of this lad was only meant to be preserved till Adil Shah was established in the power he had usurped. It is also asserted that the tyrant was withheld from destroying him by a fear that the people might demand as their ruler a prince of the blood of Nâdir; and in this extremity, he proposed elevating Shah Rokh to the throne, and continuing to rule Persia in his name.

Ádil Shah endeavoured to efface the impression made by his cruelty and his usurpation, by dispensing with a prodigal hand the vast wealth accumulated by his uncle: but even this attached none to his interests, and his reign was short and inglorious[b]. He was defeated, taken, and deprived of sight, by his brother, Ibrahim Khan, whom he had intrusted with the government of Irak. That chief did not at first declare his intention of mounting the throne. Aware that Shah Rokh was supported by several powerful nobles, he endeavoured to obtain possession of his person, and of the royal treasures before he disclosed his views. He failed, however, in this plan: and when he found he

[b] Mahomed Kooli Khan, the chief actor in the conspiracy against Nâdir, incurred the displeasure of Adil Shah. He was seized, and given up bound to Nâdir's ladies, who fell on him and cut him to pieces.

had no resource except a bold and open attempt, he proclaimed himself king: but his reign was still shorter than that of his brother, whom he had dethroned[c]. He was made prisoner by his own troops, and fell, unregretted, by the hand of the officer appointed to guard him to Meshed. Adil Shah was also sent prisoner thither, and put to death.

Shah Rokh was the son of Rizâ Kooli, with whose misfortunes those of Persia were associated. His mother was the daughter of Shah Sultan Hoossein; and he had, therefore, every claim, from his descent, to the throne he now filled. He was also popular on account of his youth, his personal beauty, his amiable manners, and humane character. But all these fair hopes were blasted by the art and ambition of an enemy, who, encouraged by the confusion of the times, sought to obtain the crown by the destruction of the prince in whose favour all voices appeared united. The name of this person was Meerza Syud Mahomed. He had been employed in stations of some distinction under Nâdir Shah, and boasted of being descended through a female branch from one of the Suffavean monarchs[d]. He commenced his machinations by circulating a report, that Shah Rokh inherited all the rancour of Nâdir against the religion of his country: and he brought forward the kindness and generosity with which the young monarch had treated persons of other religions, particularly Christian merchants, as a proof of this charge. He was the son of a chief priest[e] of Meshed; and the high reputation of his father gave him so great an influence with the whole order, that they combined to favour his views. Encouraged by their support,

[c] His victory over his brother was gained by the defection of Ali's army. He conquered Ameer Arslan, however, an ambitious governor, who had made himself independent in Aderbejan.

[d] His mother was the daughter of Sulimân the Second, the father of Shah Sultan Hoossein.

[e] Meerza Dâood; a man of such celebrated piety, that Shah Sultan Hoossein had not disdained to give him his sister in marriage.

he collected a body of followers, and attacked Shah Rokh before he could assemble his troops. The young prince was made prisoner, and deprived of sight; while his cruel enemy was proclaimed King of Persia, under the name of Sulimân: but his power was short. Yûsûph Ali, the principal general of Shah Rokh's army, hastened to avenge his monarch. Sulimân was defeated, taken, and put to death—a just punishment for his barbarity.

Yûsûph Ali, after this victory, restored Shah Rokh to the throne, and assumed the name of regent. But these measures were opposed by two chiefs[f], one the head of a Kûrdish, the other of an Arabian tribe, by whose combined forces he was overcome and slain. Shah Rokh, who seemed born to be the sport of fortune, was again sent from his throne to a prison. His enemies, however, a few days after quarrelled with each other, marched out of separate gates of the city, and came to action. Meer Aulum, the Arab, triumphed, but only to fall in his turn before Ahmed Khan Abdâllee. This leader has been already mentioned. Immediately after the death of Nâdir he proclaimed himself King of the Affghans, and had just added to his other conquests that of Herat. He now advanced against Meer Aulum, who was defeated and slain; and Meshed, after some resistance, submitted to him.

Ahmed Khan was now in a condition to attempt the reduction of all Persia: but the prospect was not inviting. Every province was exhausted. The Affghans were still deemed the original authors of the misery which the nation endured; and the unsuccessful attempt to alter their religion had revived the hatred which the Persians entertained for that race as Soonees. In addition to these obstacles, the example of usurpation which Nâdir Shah had given, had inspired every governor of a province and every chief of a tribe with the desire of rule, and Persia abounded with

[f] One of these was Jaffier, who commanded a large body of Kûrds; and the other Meer Aulum, the chief of a tribe of Arabs.—*Persian MSS.*

pretenders to regal power. Under such circumstances, we must admire that wisdom which led the Affghan prince to withdraw from this scene of turbulence, that he might exclusively direct his future exertions to the nobler and more legitimate object of establishing a power in his native country, which, while it gave a crown to his descendants, raised his nation to a rank and consideration far beyond what they had ever enjoyed.

Before Ahmed Khan left Khorassan, he assembled the principal chiefs, and proposed that the province which gave birth to Nâdir should be separated from Persia, and converted into a principality for his unfortunate grandson [g]. They all agreed, and promised continued allegiance; expecting, no doubt, that an arrangement which placed a blind and inefficient prince at their head, was the most favorable for their views of aggrandisement. Ahmed became the guarantee of the independence of Khorassan, which he justly concluded would hereafter form a strong barrier to guard his dominions from the ambition of whatever ruler might obtain the crown of Persia.

The blind Shah Rokh continued, as was designed, to enjoy the name of a prince; and his petty court was supported by the revenues of the city of Meshed and its immediate environs. He also received annual offerings from some chiefs, who acknowledged him as their nominal superior. The few and unimportant events relating to this prince and his family will find their place in the history of those rulers who rose to power amid the violence and distraction in which the empire was involved immediately after the death of Nâdir.

[g] Persian MSS.

Chapter XVI.

REIGN OF KERREEM KHAN, ZEND.

The History of Persia, from the death of Nâdir Shah till the elevation of Aga Mahomed Khan, the founder of the reigning family, though it occupies nearly half a century, presents no one striking feature, except the life of Kerreem Khan, Zend[h]. The happy reign of this excellent prince, as contrasted with those who preceded and followed him, affords to the historian of Persia that kind of mixed pleasure and repose, which a traveller enjoys, on arriving in a beautiful and fertile valley, during an arduous journey over barren and rugged wastes. It is pleasing to recount the actions of a chief, who, though born in an inferior rank, obtained power without crime, and who exercised it with a moderation that, for the times in which he lived, was as singular as his humanity and justice.

When Ahmed Khan was employed in settling the fate of Khorassan, Mahomed Hoossein Khan, chief of the tribe of Kajirs, (and grandfather to the present King of Persia,) established himself at Asterabad; a town on the eastern shores of the Caspian, which had long been the residence of his family; and the whole of Mazenderan had submitted to his authority. His father[i] had been murdered by Nâdir Shah; and the Kajirs cherished, in consequence, a blood feud against the descendants of that monarch. Ahmed Khan, fearing that the future enterprises of Mahomed Hoossein Khan might disturb his arrangements, sent a corps of Affghans to attack Mazenderan; but they were repulsed

[h] Zend was the name of his tribe, or clan.

[i] Fatteh Ali Khân, whose death and its cause have been noticed in the Life of Nâdir Shah.

with considerable loss: and the fame and strength of the chief of the Kajirs were greatly increased by this victory.

The province of Aderbejan was at this period under the rule of an Affghan leader[k]. Ghilan had declared itself independent under one of its own chiefs[l]: and Georgia, governed by a Christian prince of the name of Heraclius, who had learned the art of war under Nâdir, had assumed an attitude which induced many to believe it would emancipate itself from the subjection in which it had been so long held by the Mahomedan princes of Asia.

Such was the state of all the northern parts of the empire, when a chief of the tribe of Bukhteeâree, Ali Murdân Khan, took possession of Isfahan[m], and determined to raise a pageant of the house of Soofee to the throne, in order that he might reconcile the inhabitants of that capital to his usurpation of regal power. Well satisfied that he could not effect this great object without aid, he invited several omrahs to join his standard; the principal of whom was Kerreem Khan, of the tribe of Zend. This chief was not of high birth[n], and had obtained no command in the army of Nâdir; but he was distinguished for his good sense and courage. We are told by the historian of his reign, that Kerreem Khan from the first enjoyed an equal rank with Ali Murdân: and that when it was agreed to raise a young prince[o] of the race of Soofee to the throne, it was settled that one of the chiefs should be appointed his minister, and

[k] Azâd Khan, who was one of the generals of Nâdir Shah.

[l] Hidâyet Khan.

[m] He attacked and defeated Abool Fatteh Khan, who was governor of the city on the part of Shah Rokh: but he appears to have afterwards contracted some engagements with this chief, as we find him continued for a time in his station of governor.—*Tuarikh Zendeah*, by Meerza Saduc.

[n] In a genealogical account of his family, written by one of his immediate descendants, Kerreem Khan is stated to have been the son of a celebrated freebooter of the name of Eymâck; but there is no attempt to trace his descent further.

[o] This pageant was the son of the sister of Shah Sultan Hoossein: he was between eight and nine years old, and was crowned under the name of Shah Ismael.

that the other should command the army. But it appears from other authorities, that Kerreem did not consider himself on a level with Ali Murdân Khan. It is probable, that his ambition at the commencement of the connexion was limited to the prospect of succeeding that leader, who was very old and had no children.

When the forces of these chiefs occupied Isfahan, it was distracted by a number of parties. Every pretender to the throne had his adherents in the capital: but the inhabitants were soon reconciled to the new government. The troops of Ali Murdân Khan at first committed some excesses, but no blood was shed; and that omrah, though stern and severe in his manner, was neither cruel nor unjust [p]. His fame, however, was soon eclipsed by that of Kerreem, who, when they took possession of Isfahan, defended the inhabitants of Julfâ, the quarter where he commanded, from the slightest injury either to their persons or property. His conduct was more remarkable, as they were almost all Christians: but Kerreem thought more of their condition than of their religion, and displayed all that moderation and humanity which distinguished his character. He was rewarded with the warmest gratitude of those whom he saved from pillage. Even his soldiers respected the principles of their leader; and the eyes of all were directed with admiration and astonishment to a chief of a barbarous tribe who refrained from plunder, and showed, amid scenes of violence and confusion, so marked a love of order and justice.

The conduct of Kerreem obtained him a popularity which excited the jealousy of Ali Murdân Khan; and a short period brought them to an open rupture. Ali Murdân Khan had taken advantage of Kerreem's absence to oppress the inhabitants of Julfâ, and afterwards publicly reproved him for the vehemence with which he expressed his sentiments on this occasion. He had also put to death the governor of Isfahan [q]; and it was obvious that Kerreem

[p] Persian MSS.
[q] Abool Fatteh Khan.

would be the next victim of his suspicion and resentment. Aware of his danger, and preferring open hostility to such friendship, Kerreem took the field with his followers, and declared himself the enemy of Ali Murdân, who, after a short contest with various fortune, was assassinated by a noble of the name of Mahomed Khan [r], and by his death left to his rival the undisputed possession of the southern provinces of Persia. But Kerreem, before he could expect to preserve those territories in peace, had still to contend with many and powerful enemies. Before we proceed to narrate the wars in which he engaged, it will be useful to take a view of the means and impressions to which he trusted for success, and to which he ultimately owed his complete triumph.

The Persians may be divided into four great classes. The first, and the most powerful if united, are the native tribes, who continue to live in tents [s], and change their residence with the season. Their habits are pastoral and military [t]; and they are chiefly to be found along those ranges of hilly countries which, commencing near the entrance of the Persian Gulf, stretch, parallel to its shores, as far as Shuster, and thence, taking a north-western direction, extend up the left bank of the Tigris, to the borders of Armenia. The region described includes Kerman, almost all Fars, a part of Irak, and the whole of Kûrdistan. The inhabitants of these countries are divided into many different tribes; but there cannot be a stronger proof of their coming from one stock, than that their languages are all rude dialects of the Pehelvee. There is a considerable difference in these dialects, but not so much as to prevent the inhabitants

[r] It is stated by some authors, that this chief was a relation of Kerreem Khan, and that he deserted his standard and joined Ali Murdân Khan for the express purpose of perpetrating this crime.—*Tuarikh Zendeâh*, by Meerza Saduk.

[s] In the northern parts of Persia, where the climate is very severe, they inhabit hovels in winter.

[t] Some of them are also settled in Mazenderan.

of one province understanding that of another. Since the introduction of the religion of Mahomed, no king of Persia had been of this race. That country had either been governed by Tartar or Arabian monarchs. The numerous tribes of native Persians had, consequently, always been regarded with apprehension; and a jealous policy had sought to weaken them by transplanting them to distant quarters, and fomenting internal divisions; but the great counterpoise to their power were the Tartar, Turkish, or Turkuman tribes[u], who, at different periods, accompanied conquerors from beyond the Oxus, from the banks of the Volga, and from the plains of Syria, into Persia. The usages of these tribes in all that related to their rude habitations, their mode of life, and of warfare, were like those of the natives; but they had continued distinct, from the difference of their language; and that circumstance alone (had other motives been wanting) would have kept alive a spirit of rivalry and hatred between these two great classes of the military population of Persia. The Turkish tribes, though not so numerous as the Persians, were more powerful, because more united and more wealthy. Through all the revolutions of that kingdom, they had been kept more concentrated, as they formed, from the conquest of Toghrul Beg, till that of Abbas the Great, the force on which the different races of monarchs chiefly depended.

The citizens and cultivators of Persia were not warlike, though the former, on many occasions, by their gallant defence of their lives and property, had acquired a high reputation for valour. Almost all the towns and villages were walled; and in a country where the science of attack was little known, the efforts of the inhabitants (part of whom were always a militia) in repelling attack were often success-

[u] There can hardly be said to be any distinction in these names, which are indiscriminately used by Persian historians to describe the tribes in Persia deriving their origin from Tartary or Tûrkistan, and speaking the Turkish language.

ful; consequently, though this part of the population seldom furnished many recruits to an army, their attachment, during civil warfare, was of great consequence to the chief whose cause they espoused.

The fourth class of the inhabitants of Persia consisted of a number of Arabian tribes, who entirely occupied the level country between the mountains and the Persian Gulf. This tract, which, as has been before stated[x], resembles the peninsula of Arabia more than any of the interior provinces of Persia, had been long abandoned to this race, who from the earliest ages possessed a superiority over the Persians at sea. The latter indeed seem, at all periods of their history, to have at once dreaded and abhorred that element. The Arabs had consequently not only possessed themselves of the islands in the Gulf, but of almost all the harbours along the coast. Their children maintained these possessions, yielding at times a real, and at others a nominal, obedience to the government of Persia; but their poverty, the heat of the climate, and the barrenness of the soil, combined with the facilities of embarking in their boats, have at all periods aided the efforts of this race to maintain themselves in a state of rude independence.

Such was the character of that nation over which Kerreem Khan desired to establish his government. He was chief of a small tribe, who, though described as a branch of that of the Lac, claimed a high rank among the native Persians[y]. He summoned to his standard the whole of this class, and urged them to union and exertion, that they might no more be deemed a conquered people, but resume that pre-eminence to which they had a right from their numbers, their valour, and their glorious descent from the ancient heroes of Persia. The inhabitants of the principal cities in the empire showed from the first their partiality to Kerreem,

[x] Vide vol. i. p. 2.

[y] Some authors assert, that this tribe received the name of Zend from being charged by Zoroaster with the care of the Zend-a-vesta, or scripture of that prophet.

which was grounded on their confidence in his humanity and justice. The Arabians, who had preserved the habits of their nation, admired the simplicity and manliness of his character; and even those enemies, against whom he had chiefly to contend, the Affghan[*] and Turkish tribes, who fought under the banners of his rivals, considered Kerreem Khan with respect, and placed an implicit reliance not only in his pledged faith, but in the generosity of his disposition and the probity of his mind.

Kerreem Khan, after the death of Ali Merdân Khan, had two formidable rivals[a] to subdue, before his power could be firmly established. It will prevent confusion to give a distinct account of his contest with each. In his first action with Azâd Khan Affghan, the ruler of Aderbejan, fought near Cazveen, he was so completely defeated, that he was compelled not only to abandon Isfahan, but Shiraz. Continuing his retreat, he entered those great ranges of mountains which divide the elevated and fertile valleys of Fars from the arid country between their base and the shores of the Persian Gulf, and which is emphatically termed the Province of Gurmâseer, or the region of heat[b]. We are told, that Kerreem, discouraged by his reverses and the desertion of a number of his followers, had at this period some thoughts of seeking that repose, which, with all his ambition, he loved, by flying to India; but if ever he indulged in so unworthy a scheme, he was diverted from it by the remonstrances of Roostem Sultan, the chief of Khisht, a village situated in a small valley near the top of one of those mountains which immediately overlook the Gurmâseer. That gallant soldier represented how easy it would be to defeat the army of Azâd Khan when entangled in a difficult pass, which they must march through before they reached Khisht. Roostem Sultan did more than giv

[*] The Affghans were mere temporary invaders, and cannot, therefore, deemed a class of the population of Persia.

[a] Azâd Khan Affghan, and Mahomed Hoossein Khan Kajir.

[b] Tuarikh Zendeah.

advice; he offered to attack the enemy with his mountaineers, and was successful in persuading Kerreem Khan to await the result of an action.

The pass of Kumâridge is in extent about two miles. The road, or rather path, which winds along the edge of the mountain, is very narrow, (in some places not more than two feet wide,) and consequently, only admits of troops marching in single files. The surface over which this difficult road has been made is hard rock; but there are a number of small hills in its vicinity, on which there are neither rocks nor vegetation. These appear to be formed of different layers of pebbles and loose earth. They are very steep, and rise in clusters of low and high peaks, some of which approach the road within less than a hundred yards. It was in the peaks of these hills, and in the most inaccessible parts of the mountain, that Roostem Sultan posted his men, while Kerreem Khan waited for the enemy in the valley below[c]. The troops of Azâd Khan were permitted to enter the pass before the attack commenced. When it did, the confusion was instant and irremediable. They were entirely exposed to the mountaineers, who took aim at them with all the coolness inspired by security. Those who rushed forward were met and destroyed, before they could form in any numbers, by the body near Khisht under Kerreem Khan. All who remained for any time in the pass were killed; but retreat was impossible, as those in the rear, when the action commenced, rushed forward to support their comrades. A few brave men, rendered desperate by their situation, made an attempt to reach their enemies; but they only hastened their own destruction. The victory was complete; and Kerreem Khan, attended by the chief of Khisht,

[c] I have been twice over the ground where this action was fought. When I visited it in 1800, I was accompanied by the grandson of Roostem Sultan, and there were several old men with him who had fought in the battle, and who pointed out every spot they had occupied. I became afterwards acquainted with Zâl Khan, the son of Roostem Sultan, who with feelings of just pride recited to me the particulars of this action.

and reinforced by several tribes of Arabians, pursued the fugitives, and once more occupied the city of Shiraz, where he employed himself in recruiting his army. He had no further contest with Azâd Khan[d], who was soon afterwards compelled, by the result of a war into which he entered with Mahomed Hoossein Khan, to fly to Bagdad; but the ruler of that city, though he granted him protection, refused to aid him in any effort to recover his possessions. He next endeavoured to engage the Georgian prince, Heraclius, in his cause, but with no better success. Wearied of a wandering life, he at last threw himself upon the clemency of Kerreem Khan[e], who received him with kindness, promoted him to the first rank among his nobles, and treated him with so generous a confidence, that he soon converted this dangerous rival into an attached friend.

The most powerful enemy of Kerreem Khan was Mahomed Hoossein Khan, the chief of the Kajirs. The Turkish tribe of Kajir had been long settled in Syria. They were brought thence to Persia by Timoor, and were among the seven tribes who raised Shah Ismael, the first king of the Seffavean race, to the throne[f]. We must conclude that this tribe was both numerous and brave, from the division of them by Abbas the Great into three branches; one of which he stationed at Gunjah, in Georgia, that they might check the incursions of the Lesghees[g]; another was planted at Merv, the ancient capital of Margiana, which, from its situ-

[d] The army of this chief, though only in part composed of his countrymen, was still called the Affghan army; and the great hatred which the inhabitants of southern Persia entertained against a ruler of that nation, no doubt operated in favour of Kerreem Khan.

[e] It is stated, that Kerreem demanded from Heraclius to deliver up Azâd Khan, but that was an act of which the Georgian prince was incapable. However, when he refused the Affghan chief his support, he is supposed to have recommended his throwing himself upon the clemency of Kerreem.

[f] Persian MSS.

[g] The Lesghees inhabit the mountains between Georgia and the Caspian, and are alike remarkable for their valour and turbulence. They are now subject to Russia.

ation on the frontier of Khorassan, had been always deemed the principal defence of that province against the incursions of the Oosbegs; and the third was settled at Asterabad[h], a small province, bordering on the country of those Turkuman tribes who dwell along the eastern shores of the Caspian, and who, defended from subjugation by their deserts and their courage, subsist by making constant predatory inroads into Persia. The first of these branches, which was settled at Gunjah, attached themselves to the fortunes of Nâdir Shah; and in compliment to him took the name of Kajir Affshâr[i]. They declined after his death. The second[k] continued, surrounded by enemies, to hold possession of Merv; while the chiefs of the third now openly aspired to the throne of Persia, which they would even now have attained, had they not been distracted and weakened by domestic feuds. This branch of the Kajirs is divided into two great families, or clans[l]; the higher, and the lower. The chiefs of the former had been the acknowledged superiors, until the elevation of Fatteh Ali Khan, who belonged to the latter, to be the general of Shah Tâmâsp, gave him an influence and authority, which led to his being recognised as the head of the whole tribe. When he was murdered by Nâdir Shah, that monarch, who desired to foment divisions in this formidable tribe, gave the government of Asterabad to a noble of the

[h] "The small province of Asterabad is sometimes included in Mazenderan, which it resembles in appearance, climate, and productions. This is the ancient Hyrcania, and the paternal estate of the present King of Persia, as chief of the Kajir tribe, who have entire possession of the province. It is bounded on the west by the Caspian Sea; to the south it is separated by a lofty ridge of mountains from the districts of Dâmghân and Bistan; it extends to the east as far as the longitude of 58°, and is divided from Dâghestan by the river Ashor. The city of Asterabad, the capital of this province, is situated near the mouth of the river Ester, on a bay of the Caspian Sea."— KINNIER's *Memoir of Persia*, p. 168.

[i] Nâdir, as has been before stated, was of the tribe of Affshâr.

[k] The name of this tribe of Kajirs is Azdânloo.

[l] The Turkish names of these families are *Youkhâree-bâsh* and *Ashâkâ-bâsh*, which may be translated *the higher* and *lower*.

higher family[m]; and Mahomed Hoossein Khan, the son of Fatteh Ali, was compelled to save his life by taking refuge with the Turkuman tribes, who feed their flocks in the neighbourhood of that town. Aided by these robbers and a few other adherents, he, during the life of Nâdir Shah, made an attack on his native district, which at first was successful; but, being unable to maintain himself, this expedition terminated in the death or ruin of almost all who were rash enough to attach themselves to his fortunes. He escaped again to the Turkumans, with whom he had established such a connexion as seems always to have afforded him a safe retreat.

We find in Jonas Hanway a very particular and curious account of the capture of Asterabad by Mahomed Hoossein Khan, and of the subsequent dispersion and punishment of the followers of the Kajir chief. Hanway was in Asterabad when it was taken; and when the valuable investment, of which he had the charge, was presented by Mahomed Hoossein to the Turkumans, he with horror heard these barbarians demand, that "the merchant, as well as all his goods, should be given to them. He would," they said, "be useful in looking after their sheep." The Persian chief was too generous to comply. He told them to be content with the plunder; and the man, thus saved from looking after flocks on the shores of the Caspian, not only obtained from the justice of Nâdir Shah the restitution of almost all the property he had lost, but lived to become a most distinguished citizen in one of the first capitals in the world.

From this event, until the death of Nâdir Shah, during nearly four years, Mahomed Hoossein Khan remained with the Turkumans[n]. The moment he heard that the conqueror was slain, he appears to have left his retreat; and

[m] The name of this chief was Zumân-beg. His father, Mahomed Hoossein Khan, was a great favorite of Nâdir Shah. It was this chief who, by the order of Rizâ Kooli Meerza, put an end to the life of Shah Tâmâsp.

[n] Tuarikh Kajir.

we find him a few months after in such force, that he defeated (as has been before stated) a large body of Affghans belonging to the army of Ahmed Shah, who attempted to penetrate into Mazenderan.

Kerreem Khan, after he had made himself master of Shiraz, took advantage of the contest in which his enemies, Azâd Khan and Mahomed Hoossein Khan, were engaged with each other, not only to subject the whole of Fars to his authority, but to possess himself of Isfahan, and a great part of Irak[o]. He was soon, however, compelled to abandon the greatest part of these territories; for Mahomed Hoossein Khan, after defeating Azâd Khan, and adding Aderbejan to his possessions, directed his march toward Isfahan, with an army far superior to any that had been assembled under one chief since the death of Nâdir Shah. Kerreem Khan made an attempt to arrest his progress, but in vain: he was compelled to retreat to Shiraz, where he shut himself up, determined to abide a siege.

We are informed by an intelligent traveller[p], that success completely changed the character of Mahomed Hoossein Khan. He had been remarkable for his mildness and moderation; but the near prospect of the crown made him haughty and rapacious. He particularly evinced this change in his conduct to the inhabitants of Isfahan, no longer treating them with that temper and justice which he had shown when he thought their attachment of consequence to his interests. He now levied large contributions on the city, and allowed his troops to commit, unpunished, the most wanton excesses. These proceedings were equally calculated to diminish his reputation, and to add to that of his rival, Kerreem, whose behaviour towards the citizens of the capital had never changed with circumstances.

Mahomed Hoossein Khan, having completed his preparations, left eight thousand men in Isfahan, and advanced,

[o] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

[p] Olivier, vol. vi. p. 70.

with a force, amounting to nearly thirty thousand, to lay siege to Shiraz[q]. The defences of that city consisted only of a high mud-wall, flanked by round towers, and surrounded by a deep dry ditch: but in Persia the science of attack is not more advanced than that of defence; and the slightest fortification seemed formidable to those whose force was chiefly cavalry, and whose unskilful gunners could only fire their unwieldy cannon a few rounds in the course of a day. Nevertheless, every thing concurred to give confidence to the besiegers. The attack commenced at a season when the country round Shiraz is beautiful. The fields were covered with grain; and the most abundant harvest seemed growing for the support of the invaders. But the hopes which the first success of their operations and the appearance of plenty inspired, soon vanished. Their batteries were hardly opened before they were attacked by repeated sallies from the garrison: while their attention was occupied in repelling these, a considerable body of horse, commanded by Shaikh Ali Khan, a brave and able leader of the tribe of Zend, commenced a predatory warfare on their supplies; and he was aided by the inhabitants of the surrounding country, who burnt their own fields, and retired with their families and all the property they could carry, into the neighbouring mountains[r]. The effect of these measures was a scarcity of provisions in the camp of Mahomed Hooseein Khan, and discontent among his soldiers. The delays and hardships of a protracted siege, which often weary the patience of well-appointed and disciplined bodies of men, are altogether insupportable to those loose, irregular, and unconnected masses which constitute the force of an Asiatic prince. In the present case, the evil became more dangerous from the composition of the besieging army, a great proportion of which was new levies; and some, before the flight

[q] Persian MSS.
[r] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

of Azâd Khan, had been fighting for years against the chief under whose banners they now served.

While the light troops of Kerreem were harassing the besiegers, that chief not only bravely defended the city, but employed every art to spread defection among his enemies. His efforts were completely successful: the daily desertion of numerous bodies of his troops warned Mahomed Hoossein Khan of the necessity of an early retreat[*]. He suddenly raised the siege, and marched to Isfahan: but the corps he had left there dispersed the moment they heard of his failure. Thus he was compelled to retire to Mazenderan, which he reached with a dispirited army, reduced by desertion to twelve thousand men.

Kerreem Khan, after recruiting his forces, and restoring tranquillity to Fars, advanced to Isfahan, where he was received with the most sincere joy. The inhabitants welcomed him as the ruler they loved; and their example was followed by all the principal cities in Irak. Kerreem took care to preserve a feeling to which he was already so deeply indebted. His military career, since he had become a competitor for the sovereign power, had not been fortunate. He had gained few victories, and had often been defeated. His condition had more than once seemed desperate; but still the preference which the citizens of Persia gave to him over his rivals, always enabled him to support reverses, and to take full advantage of every casual success. He could not but be proud of an attachment to which he had no claims but such as originated in his personal good qualities: and the strength it gave him must have been a motive for persevering in that course of moderation and justice by which it had been obtained.

While Kerreem was settling the numerous provinces which now cheerfully submitted to his authority, he detached Shaikh Ali Khan into Mazenderan, and placed under his command the choice troops of his army, in order

[*] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

that he might completely subdue Mahomed Hoossein Khan: but that object would hardly have been effected if the Kajirs had remained united. The division between the two principal families has been before noticed. The chief[t] of the house opposite to that which had for some years exercised a general rule over the whole, either tempted by the offers of Kerreem Khan, or actuated by a desire of revenging former injuries, deserted at this critical moment the cause of his prince, and joined the army of Shaikh Ali Khan[u]. Several of his relations and adherents were, in consequence of this treachery, put to death. This rash act of resentment revived, with increased violence, the feud that had so long distracted this tribe. Although these events must have left Mahomed Hoossein Khan with little hope of success, he determined to meet his enemies; and even they confess, that he fought with a valour which deserved victory. His efforts, however, were in vain. Some new levies, who had just joined his standard, fled soon after the action commenced: their example was followed by all his troops. He would have escaped if his horse had not fallen[x], which gave his pursuers time to come up; among them was his irritated and implacable enemy, the chief of the Kajirs, who had deserted at the opening of the campaign. He could expect no mercy from his adversary, and only hastened his fate by an attempt at resistance. His head, displayed upon a pike, proclaimed to all the triumph of Kerreem Khan over the greatest and most powerful of the rivals[y] who had disputed with him the rule of Persia.

[t] This chief, who was the head of the family of Youkhâree-bâsh, was also named Mahomed Hoossein Khan.

[u] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

[x] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

[y] The principal chiefs of the family of Mahomed Hoossein Khan, including all his sons, fled to the country of the Turkumans, and remained there about four years before they gave themselves up to Kerreem Khan, by whom they were treated with consideration and kindness. Aga Mahomed Khan was the eldest of those princes. Olivier, in his account of this transaction, states, that they were taken by Shaikh Ali Khan as hostages to Shiraz: but this

The conquest of Mazenderan was followed by the submission of Ghilan and the greatest part of Aderbejan; but the latter province was soon disturbed by the pretensions of Fatteh Ali Khan, a chief of the tribe of Affshâr, who had given his support, at different periods, to the competitors opposed to Kerreem Khan, and now ventured to proclaim himself his open enemy. He was defeated in an action fought on a plain[z] a short distance to the south of Tebreez. He fled into the city of Oormeah[a]; but, after sustaining a siege of some months, seeing no prospect of success, he threw himself upon the generosity of Kerreem, who did not hesitate to pardon him[b].

Before Fatteh Ali Khan surrendered, he had endeavoured, and apparently with success, to engage some of the principal nobles of Kerreem Khan to enter into a conspiracy against his life. The plot was discovered, and those concerned in it punished. Some persons of high rank were put to death. The Persian historian[c] of Kerreem informs us, it was for a participation in this conspiracy that the gallant Shaikh Ali Khan was condemned to lose his sight[d]. If this chief, who was related to Kerreem, and

is evidently an error. I follow the Tuarikh Zendeâh of Meerza Saduk, who expressly asserts that they gave themselves up some time afterwards, and were treated with great humanity and attention.

[z] The name of this plain is Kârâ Chemun, or "the Dark Meadow."

[a] "The very ancient city of Urumeah, the Thebarma of Strabo, and supposed birth-place of Zoroaster, is situated in a noble plain, fertilized by the River Shar, and on the south-west of the lake to which it gives its name. This town is thirty-two fursungs from Tebreez, and contains a population of twelve thousand souls. It is defended by a strong wall and deep ditch, that can be filled with water from the river; and the neighbourhood produces corn and fruit in abundance. Urumeah cannot now boast of a single ruin of any consequence; and the natives are not even aware of the tradition concerning the birth of Zoroaster."—KINNIER's *Memoir of Persia*, p. 154.

[b] He some time afterwards forfeited by misconduct his title to clemency, and was put to death.

[c] Tuarikh Zendeâh.

[d] Olivier, on what authority I know not, places this act several years after the date mentioned by the author of the Tuarikh Zendeâh, and states,

whose valour had been so instrumental to his elevation, was tempted by ambition to conspire against his life, he merited the dreadful sentence passed upon him: and it is not consistent with the justice due to the character of a ruler, who had the courage not only to forgive, but to employ some of his most inveterate enemies, to suppose that he was led, by a cowardly jealousy of the increasing reputation of a favourite general, to commit an act which combined, if it proceeded from such a motive, the deepest guilt with the basest ingratitude.

Kerreem Khan, throughout the whole of his struggle for power, had been partially supported by the Arab tribes, who inhabit the Persian shore of the Gulf. A large body of these had marched with him as far as Isfahan; and though their discontent had compelled him to precipitate an action with Mahomed Hoossein Khan, in which he had been defeated, principally from their bad conduct, he continued to value their attachment, and was never severe with them except when forced by their excesses, or by their refusal to pay tribute. The vigour with which he acted, when compelled to punish them, increased their respect. The most refractory and troublesome of all these petty rulers was Meer Mohunnâ, of Bunder Reeg, a small seaport, half a degree to the north-west of Abushcher. This chief was at once remarkable for his valour and his atrocious wickedness. He had offended the Persian government almost beyond the hope of pardon; having interrupted, by his depredations, the communication between Shiraz and Abusheher, now the principal port[e] of the kingdom. When attacked by a numerous army, he defended his possessions on the continent for several months; when forced to abandon them, he took refuge in the small Island of Corgo, near the top of the Gulf, nearly a degree from Bunder Reeg.

that it was imputed to a jealousy of the reputation Shaikh Ali Khan had acquired with the army.

[e] Gombroon was, about this period, almost deserted.

On this spot, which does not contain more than two square miles, and has hardly any cultivation, the desperate Arab not only supported a number of followers, and defeated all the efforts of the Shaikh of Abusheher to subdue him, but added to his means by plundering a number of vessels, and succeeded in surprising the Dutch garrison in the neighbouring Island of Kharruck. These successes, from giving more scope to his dreadful cruelties, only accelerated his ruin. All around him were enemies: but he might have braved external danger for some time, if he could have preserved the fidelity of his own tribe. A rebellion of his followers obliged him to fly to Bussorah, where he was seized and slain. The governor not only refused his claims to protection[f], but, to mark the detestation in which he held his character, directed that his corpse should be cast out into a field to be devoured by dogs. The death of Meer Mohunnâ spread joy from the Court of Shiraz to the shores of India. This monster, at the head of the list of whose crimes was the murder of a father, possessed an energy and courage which had rendered his name an object of universal dread; and the inhabitants of the shores of the Gulf still pronounce it with mixed horror and apprehension.

The territories of the Arabian tribe of Chaâb extend along the sea-shore from the River Taâb, which falls into the sea about a degree to the north-west of Abusheher, to the mouth of the Karoon, which bounds the kingdom of Persia and the province of Bussorah. Their chief, Shaikh Sulimân, had made himself so strong during the troubles after the death of Nâdir, that he ventured to oppose Kerreem Khan, who was obliged to march with a considerable force to reduce him. Sulimân, alarmed at his superior numbers, embarked in his boats, and sought refuge in the

[f] The Arabs, though they held Meer Mohunnâ in abhorrence, blamed the Governor of Bussorah for having violated, even in his person, the sacred rights of hospitality: they believe he did so to flatter the Court of Shiraz.

neighbouring small islands: but he was glad to save from destruction his fields of grain, and the large plantations of dates, on which the population in this part of Persia chiefly depend for subsistence, by the payment of a considerable sum, and a promise of regularity in the future remittance of his tribute[g].

The government of Kerreem Khan was frequently disturbed by the turbulence and ferocity of his brother, Zuckee Khan[h]. That chief at one period openly rebelled; having possessed himself of a number of the hostages which the principal officers of the kingdom had given as pledges of their fidelity, he fled to the tribe of Fylee, from whom he expected support. The attempt failed; and he was compelled to throw himself upon the clemency of his offended brother. He was not only pardoned, but restored to confidence and employment. We find him immediately afterwards detached to Dâmghân[i], where Hoossein Kooli Khan, Kajir[k], had excited some disturbances, which Zuckee Khan soon quelled. The Kajir chief fled to the Turkumans, by whom he was seized, and put to death[l]. A more cruel fate awaited those of his followers who fell into the hands of his

[g] Persian MSS.

[h] Zuckee Khan is always called the brother of Kerreem; but was only his cousin and half-brother. His father, Boodâk, was the brother of Eymack, Kerreem's father, and had married Byâghâ, the widow of Eymack, and mother of Kerreem Khan. This lady had three children by her second husband, Iskunder Khan, Zuckee Khan, and a daughter. The latter obtained celebrity from being the mother of Ali Moorâd Khan, who attained and held for some time the sovereignty of Persia.—*MS. Genealogical Table of the Zend Family.*

[i] "Dâmghân is supposed to be the ancient Hecatompylos, for some time the metropolis of the Parthian empire."—KINNIER's *Geography of Persia*, p. 173.

[k] The Tuarikh Zendeâh states, that Hoossein Kooli Khan had been placed in the government of this place by Kerreem Khan.

[l] This chief was the son of Mahomed Hoossein Khan, and the father of the reigning sovereign of Persia. In the Tuarikh Zendeâh it is stated, that he was murdered at the instigation of Hoossein Khan Youkhâree-bâsh, the Kajir chief of a rival family, who has been before mentioned, and who was, at this period, governor of Asterabad.

ferocious conqueror. The Persian historian[m] who describes the expedition to Dâmghân, is careful to inform us, that it was on this occasion that the inventive barbarity of Zuckee Khan first made a garden of his enemies. He directed the earth to be opened at equal distances, as if for the reception of trees, to form an avenue. Large branches were then cut, and a prisoner tied to each, with his head towards the root, which being placed where the ground was opened, the soil, as it was thrown in, produced a gradual suffocation. It is horrible even to think on such scenes; but still the relation is important, were it only to make the mind sensible, by extreme contrast, to the blessings of civilization.

The terror which the cruelty of Zuckee Khan inspired, was no doubt useful in preserving the general tranquillity of the kingdom. The known lenity of the ruling prince had encouraged numbers to rebel, with an expectation that, even if unsuccessful, pardon would follow submission. All knew that these hopes were vain when his savage brother was employed. He had succeeded not only in repressing rebellion at Dâmghân, but in Mazenderan[n], and several other parts of the empire; and every where his track was marked by blood. The very rumour of his approach was at last sufficient to spread dismay; and those who most execrate his memory confess, that he greatly contributed to that general peace and security which Persia enjoyed during the latter years of Kerreem Khan.

The troops which civilized nations maintain for their defence, are raised indiscriminately from the mass of the population; and the power to support them increases with those resources which are greatest in periods of tranquillity. It is very different with barbarous states, where the armies are formed from a class of men quite distinct from the rest of the community. They receive no regular

[m] Meerza Saduk.

[n] The Kajirs of the Youkhâree-bâsh, had rebelled, and several of their chiefs were taken, and put to death.

pay; thus their means of subsistence are narrowed or extended with the sphere of their action. Such a body, if numerous, cannot be supported but in war, where they live upon the enemy; yet it is hazardous to disband men who have no pursuits of industry, and who have hardly a resource, when at peace with foreign powers, but in internal troubles. If (which rarely happens) the wealth of a rude government enables it to pay an army, it cannot allow it to remain idle, without the certainty of its soon becoming useless; for in bodies of men so constituted, efficiency must be the result of that individual energy and experience which actual employment alone can give; and the place of which, in regular armies, is in a great degree supplied by the influence of order and discipline. It is on this general reasoning that we must account for those constant wars in which we find some of the best Asiatic monarchs engaged; and it is probable, that these considerations influenced Kerreem Khan in the attack he made, a few years before his death, on the Turkish territories. He had continued to display as much moderation in the exercise of his power, when sovereign of Persia, as in its attainment. Although he deemed it prudent to confine the pageant [o] to whom Ali Murdân Khan [p] had given the name of king; and to refrain from the mockery of false allegiance, he only styled himself Vakeel, or lieutenant of the kingdom, and seemed to act under no desire of personal aggrandisement. Attached to Shiraz, which he had made his capital, he had ceased to lead his armies in person; he even committed the large force assembled for the siege of Bussorah to his brother, Sâduk Khan; though he must have been sensible that the ties of blood only rendered the abuse of so great a trust more probable. Considering, therefore, his disposition, and the state of Persia at the time, we must conclude

[o] He removed him from Isfahan to a fort called Aubâdâh, on the road between that city and Shiraz.

[p] Vide p. 59.

that his principal motive for attacking the Turks was to preserve internal tranquillity, by employing those most likely to disturb it in foreign war: and having taken that resolution, he studied to render the measure popular with his subjects. To men of the Sheah sect, no greater encouragement could be offered, than the prospect of conquering that land which contained the tombs of the holy Ali, and of his sainted sons, Hoossein and Hussun; and the prominent ground[q] on which Kerreem attempted to justify the war was allied to this feeling[r]. He demanded from the court of Constantinople the head of Omar, the Pâchâ of Bagdad, for having levied a tax on the Persian pilgrims who visited those sacred tombs. The answer which he must have expected soon arrived: the Turkish emperor refused to abandon his servant for doing his duty, and Sâduk was directed to commence his march. He proceeded along the shore of the Gulf with an army of near fifty thousand men; and a fleet of about thirty vessels, almost all of a very small size, which had been fitted out at Abusheher and Bunder Reeg, accompanied his operations.

The city of Bussorah, against which this force was directed, is on the right bank of that noble stream called the Shât-ool-Arab, or River of Arabia, formed by the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. From their confluence at Koornâh[s] to Bussorah is nearly sixty miles, and it is about the same distance from thence to the sea. The whole

[q] There were several other pretexts. He accused Omar of having prevented the Persians from subduing the province of Oman, by the aid he had granted to the Imâm of Muscat. He was also said to have plundered some Persian merchants.—*Tuarikh Zendeâh.*

[r] Persian MSS.

[s] "Koornâh, which is one of three *Apameas* built by Seleucus in honour of his first wife, Apama, is situated at the point of a triangle, formed by the confluence of the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. *Apamea*, although now dwindled into a petty town, was formerly a place of consequence." (Kinnier's Memoir of Persia, p. 287). Koornâh is situated on a low flat, apparently with a rich soil, and along the river are low banks to prevent the country being flooded. Here some oriental traditions fix the garden of Eden.

of this extent is navigable for ships of large burthen. The Turkish government have generally some vessels of war at Bussorah, but they are seldom in a state of equipment. This fleet (for so it is termed) appears to have offered no efficient resistance to that of Sâduk Khan: after becoming master of the river, he soon constructed a bridge of boats, by which he passed his whole army to the right bank, and immediately commenced his preparations for a siege. The city was of great extent, containing a number of large gardens, as well as houses, within its walls. The inhabitants were reckoned at forty thousand, and the troops who formed the garrison were more than a fourth of that number. The governor, Sulimân Aga, was a brave soldier, whose character gave him every right to expect the attachment of those under his orders. The walls were high, but not strong; and the chief defence was a number of bastions, on which nearly a hundred pieces of cannon were mounted.

Though the siege proceeded slowly, the Persian army made progress; and the weak court of Constantinople, alarmed at the prospect of losing a possession of such importance, ordered the Pâchâs of Van, Moossul, Diarbekir, Aleppo, and Damascus, to march, with all the troops they could collect, to Bagdad. It was at first thought that they were meant to combine with the governor of that province for the relief of Bussorah; but it soon appeared that they were only instructed to put Omar to death, in the hope that his punishment might satisfy the King of Persia, and cause him to desist from his enterprise[t]. An envoy was sent to Shiraz, to inform Kerreem Khan that his demand had been complied with, and that the cause of the rupture was removed. But Kerreem, while he amused the envoy with promises, was only encouraged by this proof of weakness, to prosecute his plan; and the brave governor of Bussorah, after a siege, or rather blockade of thirteen months, was compelled to surrender for want of provisions.

[t] Olivier, vol. iv. p. 348.

Sâduk Khan used his victory with great moderation, and appeared anxious to reconcile the inhabitants to their change of masters; but Ali Mahomed Khan, the officer whom he left in command when he returned to Shiraz, imprudently engaged in a dispute between two Arab tribes, and sustained a defeat, in which the Persians suffered severely, and their commander was slain. Sâduk, on hearing this, hastened to Bussorah; by his conciliating manner and good conduct [u], he restored peace, and remained in undisturbed possession of his conquest till the death of Kerreem Khan, when a regard for his personal interests and safety led him to abandon it. The Turkish government, by this accident, regained, without having made any effort for its recovery, one of their most important possessions in that quarter of Asia.

From the invasion of the Affghans till the latter years of Kerreem Khan, European nations had maintained but little intercourse with Persia, as its distracted state was very unfavorable for commerce. The English had removed their factory from Gombroon in consequence of the oppressive conduct of a governor of Lâr [x]; but they had afterwards fixed it at Abusheher, where it continued subject to all the vicissitudes of the changing and unsettled government within the dominions of which it was established.

The Dutch still carried on a trade with Persia and the eastern parts of Turkey; and an event occurred in the beginning of the reign of Kerreem Khan, which, if their power had not been on the decline, would have given them a permanent and superior influence to all their European rivals

[u] He was particularly attentive to the English. He told the resident, that the factory he lived in was the only house fit for him to occupy, but that, so great was his respect for the English nation, he would not take it if the walls were of gold.

[x] Nâser Khan, who, in 1761, forced them to give him a thousand tomâns. The court of Directors, on hearing of this, ordered them to quit the factory. Nâser Khan, who had committed other outrages, was taken prisoner by Kerreem Khan in 1763, and carried to Shiraz.

on these shores. Baron Kniphausen, a man of considerable ability, had been appointed by the Dutch government of Batavia their agent at Bussorah. The Turkish governor of that place, on the pretext that the baron had transgressed the laws [y] of the country, imprisoned him, and refused his release till he had paid a considerable sum of money [z]. The baron proceeded to Batavia, justified himself completely to his superiors, and then laid before them a plan which combined the resentment of the injury offered to his country in his person, with advancing the interests of the Dutch East India Company. His project was to seize on Kharruck [a], an island containing about twelve square miles, near the top of the Gulf; which, while it in a great degree commands the entrance of the Bussorah river, has an easy communication of a few hours' sail with the shores both of Persia and Arabia. His plans were adopted. He sailed with two ships, and found no difficulty in taking possession of the island [b], where he erected a small fortification. His first step was to make his two vessels blockade the Bussorah river; and the detention of some Turkish ships from India compelled the governor not only to make restitution of the money he had extorted, but to court the friendship of the baron, who received equal attention and respect from all the rulers in the vicinity. The Island of Kharruck rose rapidly into importance. It was a safe emporium; the merchants were near several markets, where it was advantageous to sell, but dangerous to trust their goods for any length of time, as every change in the government exposed them to the hazard of being plundered. Thus the local position of this island was peculiarly

[y] He accused him of having cohabited with a Mahomedan lady, and of withholding some customs that were the right of the government.

[z] He took fifty thousand rupees from the baron, thirty thousand from his second, and twenty thousand from the broker.

[a] This island is very healthy, has plenty of fine water, and in parts the soil is good.

[b] The Shaikh, or Governor, of Bunder Reeg, who claimed the right or lordship of this island, had made the baron a grant of it.—Ives's *Voyage*.

favorable to commerce; and it possessed great advantages, in the abundance and excellence of its fresh water, and the salubrity of its climate. Under circumstances so propitious, it is not surprising that Kharruck should have soon become a flourishing settlement. Its population, which amounted to a hundred poor fishermen and pilots when Baron Kniphausen first established himself there, increased, in the eleven years that the Dutch held it, to upwards of twelve thousand souls. It was neglected and lost, as has been described, because it was not worth preserving to the nation[c] by whom it had been acquired.

The internal commerce of Persia, as well as its agriculture, had greatly revived during the latter years of Kerreem Khan. He gave particular encouragement to all the industrious classes of his subjects, to none more than the Armenians settled in his kingdom. This body of Christians were the first who benefited from his justice; and to the last moment of his life he was anxious for their prosperity. The possessors and cultivators of the soil in Persia pay but a very moderate proportion of its produce to the government; but, as the monarch can impose arbitrary fines and requisitions, he may be said to possess the power of taxing at pleasure. This class therefore is almost as dependent for their happiness on his personal disposition, as any other in the community. They enjoyed under Kerreem as much consideration as he was able to give them; and he was on all occasions ready to redress the wrongs they suffered from the officers placed over them; but still, from the opposite view which travellers who visited Persia during his reign have taken of the condition of his subjects, we must conclude, that the state of the countries near the seat of rule and under his immediate observation, was very different from that of provinces, which, from their remoteness to the capital, or the turbulence of their inhabitants, were given over to the arbi-

[c] This account of the Dutch establishment at Kharruck is taken from contemporary travellers, and from the public records.

trary rule of military chiefs. All the cities in Persia flourished under this prince; but none in a degree comparable with Shiraz. Kerreem was perhaps first induced to make this city his capital, by its central situation among the pasture-lands of those tribes on whose support he chiefly depended, and by the attachment which its inhabitants early showed to his interests. He was at great pains to strengthen its defences; and he improved and ornamented the city itself with a number of useful and magnificent buildings, and beautified its environs by the erection of some fine edifices, near which were planted luxuriant gardens; but he appeared still more desirous of promoting the comfort and prosperity of its inhabitants, than of increasing its magnitude or splendour. "The rays of this sun of Majesty," observes a Persian historian[d], speaking of Kerreem Khan, "were spread over the whole empire; but its genial heat was most felt at Shiraz. The inhabitants of that favored city enjoyed perfect tranquillity and happiness. In the society of moon-faced damsels they passed their leisure hours; the sparkling goblet circulated; and love and pleasure reigned in every breast." This is an oriental mode of informing us, that, by the protecting care of their sovereign, they were contented and happy.

Kerreem Khan died at an advanced age, being nearly eighty years old[e]. He had enjoyed independent power for twenty-six years; and during the last twenty had been, without a competitor, the acknowledged sovereign of Persia. His character is not easily described. It has few of the common features of a despotic monarch. He had ambition,

[d] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

[e] Some authors state that he was seventy-five; others seventy-six; and several that he was near eighty. It is probable that Kerreem only knew his own age by a reference to events that occurred about the period of his birth. There is no register of births in a wandering tribe; and it is not probable that either this prince, or any of his family, possessed an exact record on such a subject. I one day asked a Persian of a wandering tribe his age. The answer was, *Moollah ná hustum ke hissáb sál be dánum*: "I am not a learned man, that I should understand to calculate my years."

but free from the tubulence which almost always mixes with it. He preserved an undisturbed temper equally amid scenes of violence and repose; and was, through life, distinguished by a manly simplicity of mind, which kept him as remote from the pomp and vanities of his high rank, as from that affectation which endeavours to conceal its pride under the garb of humility. Although humane, he sometimes punished severely; and he employed others of a disposition very different from his own to spread terror among his enemies and rebellious subjects; but his clemency was hardly ever refused to a fallen or repentant foe. One of the most remarkable features in his character was goodness of heart. He often repeated an anecdote of his early life, which showed a feeling very uncommon among men of his condition. "When I was a poor soldier," said Kerreem, "in Nâdir Shah's camp, my necessity led me to steal from a saddler a gold embossed saddle, sent by an Affghan chief to be repaired. I soon afterwards learnt that the saddler was in prison, and sentenced to be hung. My conscience smote me, and I replaced the saddle exactly in the place whence I took it. I watched till it was discovered by the saddler's wife; on seeing it she gave a scream of joy, fell down on her knees, and prayed aloud that the person who had brought it back might live to have a hundred gold embossed saddles. I am quite certain," Kerreem used to add, smiling, "that the honest prayer of the old woman has aided my fortune in attaining that splendour which she desired I should enjoy[f]."

Kerreem Khan possessed that noble courage which dares to pardon; and the generous confidence with which he treated those whom he forgave, appears to have almost always attached them to his person. His virtues had nothing of a romantic character; they were, like all his other qualities, plain and intrinsic. He was esteemed pious, and was exact in the performance of his religious duties; but his re-

[f] Persian MS. Major Campbell's Journal.

ligion was not austere. His natural disposition indeed was gay and cheerful; and he continued to the last to enjoy the pleasures of this world, and anxiously desirous that others should do the same. This inclination has given rise to one of the few attacks[g] that have been made on his reputation; but, if we are to believe the concurring testimony of historians and of living witnesses, we must pronounce that his example, even in the path of dissipation, could not have been very baneful; for his love of pleasure never degenerated into intemperance; nor was he ever unfitted by indulgence for the active performance of his duties as a sovereign.

Kerreem Khan had received no education. It is stated that he could not even write; and from his birth, and the occupations of his early years, it is probable he neither had, nor desired to have, any such accomplishment. The son of a petty chief in a barbarous tribe[h] would be brought up to despise all attainments, except such as were suited to his condition of life. In these he excelled. Possessed of great bodily strength and an active frame, he was an admirable horseman, and expert in all military exercises; but, though unlearned himself, he valued and encouraged learning in others. His court was the resort of men of liberal knowledge. He built tombs over the remains of Sadi and Hafiz, which are deposited near Shiraz, and endowed these edifices with gardens and lands for the support of the dervishes, or holy men, appointed to watch over them. This pious act, while it marked his regard for genius, was one of the most popular in his reign with the inhabitants of a city, the chief boast of which is its being the birth-place of those poets.

It is the usage with the King of Persia to devote a number

[g] The Russian traveller, Gmellin, who visited, during Kerreem Khan's reign, some of the provinces near the Caspian then recently subdued, and with difficulty kept in subjection, reports him, conformably to the impression he received, to have been a prince immersed in luxury, and heedless of the miseries of his subjects.

[h] The Zend, and all other branches of the Lac, are certainly as barbarous as any among the wandering tribes of Persia.

of hours every day to hear the complaints of his subjects. An anecdote is related of Kerreem Khan, which, while it shows the confidence reposed in his temper and justice, admirably illustrates the consideration and feeling with which he performed this important duty. He was one day retiring from his judgment-seat, harassed and fatigued with a long attendance, when a man rushed forward in apparent distraction, calling out in a loud voice for justice. "Who are you?" said Kerreem.—"I am a merchant," replied the man, "and have been robbed and plundered by some thieves of all I possess."—"What were you about," said the prince, "when you were robbed?"—"I was asleep," answered the man.—"And why did you sleep?" exclaimed Kerreem in a peevish and impatient tone.—"Because," said the undaunted Persian, "I made a mistake, and thought you were awake." The irritation of the royal judge vanished: he was too much pleased with the manly boldness of the petitioner to be offended at the reproach. Turning to his vizier, he bade him pay the amount of the merchant's losses from the treasury. "We must," he added, "try to recover the property from the robbers[1]."

The mode which Kerreem Khan took to attain and preserve his power, was different from that pursued by any former monarch of Persia. He made no effort to gain strength by the aid of religious or superstitious feelings. He neither tried to attach his army by gratifying their lust of plunder; nor courted the applause of a vain-glorious nation by the pursuit of ambitious projects, or the gorgeous display of royal splendour. He was modest, even to his attire; and though his rule was always firm, and at times harsh, his general manner to the meanest of his subjects was familiar and kind. There is no part of his character more pleasing and

[1] This anecdote of Kerreem Khan is taken from a small Persian MS., and I have heard it from several Persians. It is the custom in Persia, as in other countries, to apply such stories to remarkable personages; but, even in that view, the application proves the impression entertained of the character.

surprising, than his being able, amid such scenes as he lived in, to carry the best affections and feelings of human nature into almost every measure of his government; and his success affords a lesson to despotic monarchs. He lived happily; his death was that of a father amid a family whom he had cherished, and by whom he was beloved. The Persians to this day venerate his name; and those who have risen to greatness on the destruction of the dynasty which he founded, do not withold their tribute of applause to his goodness. Indeed, when meaning to detract from his fame, they often give him the highest possible eulogium. "Kerreem Khan[k]," they say, "was not a great king. His court was not splendid; and he made few conquests; but it must be confessed, that he was a wonderful magistrate"[l].

[k] I have repeatedly heard this observation made by the first among those Kajir chiefs who have risen to great power upon the downfall of the family of Kerreem Khan.

[l] Kutkhodah.

Chapter XVII.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DESCENDANTS OF KERREEM KHAN, ZEND.

It would be painful, after the history of a prince like Kerreem Khan, to dwell at any length on that of his descendants, who soon forfeited by their crimes that power which he had obtained by his virtues. He had five sons, four [m] survived him to become the victims to the ambition and cruelty of those chiefs of their family, who contended with each other for a crown, acknowledged by all to be their inheritance.

Zuckee Khan, the moment Kerreem died, assumed the government. Several principal chiefs of the Zend tribe [n] knew that they were personally obnoxious to him; and fearing every thing from the atrocity of his character, seized upon the ark [o], or citadel, at Shiraz, and prepared for a siege. At the same time they proclaimed themselves the adherents of Abool Fatteh Khan, the son of Kerreem; but Zuckee Khan deprived them of any popularity they might expect from this act, by declaring that young prince, and his brother, Mahomed Ali Khan [p], joint successors to the throne of

[m] The eldest of Kerreem's sons, Salah Khan, was never raised even to nominal power: he was deprived of sight by his cousin, Ackbar Khan. The second, Abool Fatteh Khan, after being a nominal king, had his eyes put out also during the reign of Sâduk Khan. The third, Mahomed Ali Khan, was blinded by Ackbar Khan. The fourth, Mahomed Rahim Khan, had the good fortune to die during the lifetime of his father; and the fifth, Ibrahim Khan, was deprived of his virility by Ackbar Khan.—*Genealogical Table of the Zend Family.*

[n] Among these were Naser Ali Khan, and the sons of Shaikh Ali Khan, the celebrated general of Kerreem Khan.

[o] This is an Arabic term. It is sometimes pronounced arek, but more generally ark. It literally signifies the citadel, and is never applied to any other fortification.

[p] This prince had married Zuckee Khan's daughter.

their father. But though he elevated these youths to nominal sovereignty, he himself assumed the substance of power, on the pretext of being, from affinity of blood, their natural guardian, they, from their age, being incompetent to the management of public affairs. He was supported in all his pretensions by his nephew, Ali Moorâd Khan[q], a chief of reputation; and their mutual efforts were directed to the reduction of the citadel. This was not an easy task; so, to avert the dangers of a protracted siege, Zuckee Khan had recourse to treachery[r]. He solemnly pledged his faith to the nobles who defended it, and not only promised to forgive all that had passed, but to admit them to a share of the highest offices in the state. They believed his professions, submitted, and were instantly seized, and put to death in the most inhuman manner[s].

Sâduk Khan, on hearing of the death of Kerreem Khan, evacuated Bussorah, and advanced toward Shiraz. When he arrived near that city, he encamped his army, and sent his son, Jaffier Khan, to wait upon Zuckee Khan, and discover his sentiments about the future settling of the government. The youth probably went to this conference with a mind not free from prejudice[t]: when he returned, he told his father, that, though every word Zuckee Khan had uttered breathed friendship and cordiality, he felt convinced, from what he had observed in the expression of his countenance, and from

[q] The son of the daughter of Boodâk and Byâghâ, and consequently the nephew of Zuckee Khan.

[r] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[s] Captain Franklin, who visited Shiraz seven years after, informs us, he was told by an eye-witness that these chiefs were butchered in presence of Zuckee Khan by the common Pehlwans, or public wrestlers of the city, who performed on this occasion the parts of executioners. He adds, that the same person assured him he saw a Turkuman soldier not only bathe his hands in their blood, but, taking some in his joined palms, drink a little, and with the remainder wash his beard, exclaiming, "Shooker Ullah!" or "Thanks be to God!" The savage meant to recommend himself to the monster whom he served, as one that delighted "to drink the blood of the enemies of his chief."

[t] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

the looks and manners of all around him, that if he went into the city, he would share the fate of the unfortunate nobles, who had been recently duped to their destruction by his treacherous arts[u]. This made the impression intended on Sâduk; who, abandoning all thoughts of an union of interest with his dangerous relation, prepared to besiege Shiraz, and appeared confident of success, from the number and supposed attachment of his troops; but he had to encounter an able and resolute soldier, and one more versed than himself in those daring and decided measures which so often command success. Zuckee Khan, when he despaired of overcoming him by treachery, imprisoned Abool Fatteh Khan, the eldest son of Kerreem Khan, whom he suspected of being well-affected to his uncle's interests, and proclaimed Mahomed Ali Khan[x], who had before only shared with his brother the name of king, sole monarch of Persia. He at the same time made prisoners three sons[y] of Sâduk Khan, who were in Shiraz; and, having shut the gates of the city, threatened with instant disgrace and death all the families of the officers and soldiers who should continue to adhere to his enemy. The effect was what he had anticipated. The terror entertained of his boldness and cruelty banished every hope that he would hesitate to execute his threats, and all the officers of Sâduk Khan's army, whose families were in the power of his enemy, deserted their chief, to save from ruin and death those who were dearer to them[z]. The brother of the late monarch, and the conqueror of Bussorah, found that all his plans were defeated. Only three hundred men remained attached to his fortune; with these he fled to Kerman. A body of horse was sent to cut off his retreat.

[u] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[x] This prince, as has been before stated, was the son-in-law of Zuckee Khan.

[y] Their names were Mahomed Tuckee Khan, Ali Nuckee Khan, and Hoossein Khan.

[z] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

They overtook him, and an irregular conflict[a] ensued, the leader[b] of the pursuers was slain, and his disheartened followers returned to Shiraz; while Sâduk Khan continued his march to Kerman, where he took shelter in a small fortress[c], commanded by a noble firm in his attachment.

The most important, if we consider its ultimate consequences, of the events which occurred at the death of Kerreem Khan, was the flight of Aga Mahomed Khan, Kajir, who had been for many years a prisoner at large in Shiraz. For some time after he surrendered himself, he had been strictly guarded, and never allowed to go beyond the walls of the town; but latterly he was permitted to take the amusement of the chase. This indulgence was owing to the kindness of Kerreem Khan's character, and to the settled state of his government; which no chief of a tribe, however powerful, could hope to disturb. The extraordinary wisdom of Aga Mahomed had attracted the notice of Kerreem, who was in the habit of asking his advice on questions of state policy[d]. Aga Mahomed had thus full opportunity of appreciating the characters of the Persian princes and nobles; and we can believe that he had long looked to the death of Kerreem Khan as the crisis of his own fate. When the last illness of that prince assumed a dangerous appearance, he contrived to leave the city[e] on the usual pretext of hunting. His sister, who was in the royal haram, sent him intelligence from hour to hour of the progress of Kerreem's disorder. At last the wished-for messenger announced, that the founder of the Zend dynasty was no more. Accompanied by a few attendants, Aga Mahomed Khan

[a] This action was fought at the pass or defile of Ursinjân, about forty miles to the eastward of Shiraz.

[b] The name of this officer was Mahomed Hoossein Khan, Zend Huzzârî.

[c] Ali Rezâ says, he remained in the fortress of Kussunjân; others, that he went to Bum-Nermânsheer. Both these fortresses are in Kerman.

[d] MS. Memoir.

[e] He went out of the city on the 12th day of Seffer, A. H. 1193, the day before that of Kerreem's death.—Ali Reza's *History of the Zend Family.*

commenced his flight[f]; and, favored by the confusion of the moment, he reached his native province of Mazenderan in safety. A considerable body of his tribe having gathered round him, he proclaimed himself a candidate for the crown of Persia, and began to collect whatever means he could to support his pretensions.

Zuckee Khan, confident that the chief of the Kajirs would not long remain satisfied with Mazenderan, detached his nephew, Ali Moorâd Khan, with his best troops[g], to oppose his further progress; but he only increased the danger which he desired to avoid. His nephew was brave and ambitious; and experience had taught him, that, in the condition of his country, a person of his rank could have no safety but in the possession of power. He had probably only waited for a favorable opportunity of revolting from a ruler in whom he could never repose confidence, and who was hated and dreaded by all his subjects. An appeal which Sâduk Khan, after his flight from Shiraz, made to Ali Moorâd, then at Teheran, gave him the pretext he desired. He assembled his officers, and demanded if it was not disgraceful to support a chief, who treated the son and brother of Kerreem Khan as Zuckee Khan had done. There was no difficulty in persuading his followers to entertain the same sentiments. Desirous of the elevation of their leader, they rejoiced in any measure likely to promote his advancement. Ali Moorâd immediately marched to Isfahan, whence the governor[h] appointed by Zuckee Khan fled at his approach. All ranks appeared to rejoice at Ali Moorâd's success; and he obtained additional popularity by proclaiming, that he

[f] He travelled with astonishing celerity, arriving at Isfahan the third day, a distance of more than two hundred and fifty miles.

[g] This force consisted of ten thousand horse and five thousand infantry.

[h] The name of this governor was Bustâm Khan. He had been nominated to the government as a reward for his repressing a commotion excited in Isfahan on the death of Kerreem Khan, by Jehangheer Khan and Mahomed Rasheed Beg, sons of Fatteh Ali Khan Affshâr, a chief whose pretensions and fate have been before noticed.—vol. ii. p. 133.

had no design beyond restoring the eldest son of the virtuous Kerreem Khan to the throne, his lawful inheritance.

Zuckee Khan[i] became quite furious when he heard of the revolt of his nephew. He immediately assembled all the force he could, and marched toward Isfahan; but the hour was near when he was to fill up the measure of his guilt, and to fall by the hands of the very men whom he had trained to crime. When he arrived at Yezdikhaust, he demanded from the inhabitants the payment of a sum[k] belonging to the public revenue, which he charged them with having secreted: on their denying all knowledge of this money, and pleading inability to raise it, he commanded that eighteen of the principal men of the town should be thrown from a precipice, immediately under the window at which he sat. Not satisfied with this act of barbarity, he sent for a Syud, or descendant of the prophet, who was remarkable for his piety, and charged him with having taken part of the money he wished to recover. The man protested his innocence, and, after being stabbed, was thrown down the same precipice. Enraged at what he deemed the obstinacy of his last victim, he directed that his wife and daughter should be given over to the brutal lust of some of his guards, who were of the tribe of Maaffee[l]; but these men, savage as they were, shuddered at the conduct of their chief, and particularly at this last act, which they deemed at once horrid and sacrilegious. While these feelings prevailed, a conspiracy was formed; and those who had long been the instruments of his guilt, established a claim on the gratitude of their country by the murder of their inhuman leader.

The town of Yezdikhaust, where this took place, is situated upon the high and rocky bank of a narrow deep vale, which in this quarter divides the provinces of Irak and Fars.

[i] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

[k] Franklin states that this sum was only three hundred tomâns,—about three hundred pounds.

[l] The Maaffee are, like the Zend, a branch of the Lac; one of the most numerous among the native tribes of Persia.

Its remarkable site and rude fortifications give it a singular and romantic appearance; and it is now interesting from being considered as a scene hallowed by the sword of retributive justice. The memory of Zuckee Khan is held in execration; and the traveller, who is passing Yezdikhaust, is stopt to hear the catalogue of his crimes: he is shown the window from which he directed the principal inhabitants and the holy Syud to be thrown; and the feelings which this spectacle, and the relation of these deeds, excite in the mind, are relieved by the story of his death, and the praises bestowed on those who had the courage to free their country from such a monster.

The character of Abool Fatteh Khan, who was proclaimed King of Persia the instant Zuckee Khan was put to death, would not lead us to suspect that he was at all concerned in this bold act[m] of justice; it placed in his hands a power which he appears to have been unfit to exercise[n]. His elevation, however, was evidently the only measure which could save the Zend family from destruction; and for a moment all indulged in the delusive expectation of tranquillity. Zâduk Khan, when he heard of Zuckee Khan's death, hastened from Kerman to Shiraz[o]. This chief was a plain soldier, of a good disposition, but subject to violent passion. The author who gives this account of his character adds,

[m] Mr. Scott Waring in his History of this period affirms, on the authority of a Persian writer, that Abool Fatteh Khan was not only concerned in this plot, but took an active part in its execution. I follow a manuscript written by a very respectable Persian, who had the fullest opportunity of knowing the real nature of this transaction.

[n] The only author who speaks favorably of the qualities and disposition of this prince is Olivier; but that well-informed and intelligent writer seldom refers to authorities. All contemporary Persian authors that I have read, represent him as weak and dissipated. I have conversed with many persons who knew him well, and they confirmed this account: they added, that he was of a gentle disposition, and unambitious.

[o] The young prince entered Shiraz, as sovereign, on Friday, the 30th of Jumadee-ool-awul, A. H. 1193, and was received with great joy by the inhabitants.

that he was not satisfied to live under a weak and dissolute[p] young prince, incapable of governing himself, yet too jealous to commit his power to those who had more experience and wisdom[q]. In the relations in which they were placed, it is not surprising that the uncle and nephew could not agree; but, not content with usurping his authority, and confining his person[r], Sâduk Khan put out the eyes of the unfortunate Abool Fatteh Khan, and proclaimed himself sovereign of Persia. He could not expect that he should be permitted quietly to enjoy a power obtained by so cruel an action; but his only dangerous rival was his nephew and step-son[s], Ali Moorad Khan. Fully aware of the ambitious designs[t] of that leader, he sent his son, Jaffier Khan, to assume the government of Isfahan, and to watch his movements.

Ali Moorad, who was at Teheran when these events occurred, instantly declared himself king, and marched, with all the force he could collect, toward Isfahan, whence the new governor fled at his approach.

Sâduk Khan, having assembled a considerable army[u], placed it under his son, Ali Nuckee, whose first operations were completely successful. He attacked and discomfited the advance of Ali Moorad; whose troops were so discou-

[p] We are informed by the historian of the Zend family, that the only joys of Abool Fatteh Khan were the circling goblet and fair damsels; and that, immersed in luxury, he was altogether unfit for government.

[q] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[r] Sâduk Khan and his sons broke in upon him when in his haram, and seized him without meeting with opposition.

[s] Sâduk Khan had married the mother of Ali Moorad; and his eldest son, Jaffier Khan, was a half brother of that chief.

[t] As long as Abool Fatteh Khan was king, Ali Moorad had professed allegiance. During that period, he marched against Zûlfekâr Khan, of Khumsâ, who had rebelled and seized on the countries about Cazveen, Sultaneah, and Zunjân. Ali Moorad defeated and slew this chief, whose head, according to usage, he sent to Shiraz.

[u] This force, of twenty thousand men, had been besieging Yezd. Ali Nuckee was joined, before he encountered Ali Moorad by his brother, Hoossein Khan.

raged by this reverse, that they dispersed in different directions. A few went over to Ali Nuckee; the remainder retired to their homes. Ali Moorad, accompanied by his own family and a few faithful adherents, retreated to Hamadan, and must either have been taken or compelled to fly his country, if he had been immediately pursued. Sâduk Khan[x] wrote to his son to desire he would not lose a moment in improving the great advantage which fortune had given him; but the idle youth, intoxicated with his success, thought of nothing but enjoying his triumph. He entered Isfahan as a conqueror, and for more than a month[y] remained in that city, giving himself up to every kind of excess. The moments which he wasted were taken full advantage of by Ali Moorad. Taught by past misfortunes that his sole dependence was on his own efforts and the attachment of his army, he evinced an union of the most resolute spirit[z] with the most conciliating temper; and his conduct had more effect on those whom he had desired to gain, from being contrasted with the vanity, insolence, and dissipation of Ali Nuckee Khan, who, roused at last from his dream of pleasure, marched from Isfahan to complete his conquest of Irak. But the hour of success was past: he was met near Hamadan by Ali Moorad, and was in his turn abandoned by almost all his followers. This unexpected defection filled him with dismay, and gave his enemy an easy victory. He was compelled to fly to Shiraz; and the victorious Ali Moorad Khan, encouraged by some further successes in the field[a], resolved on laying siege to that city.

[x] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend family.

[y] According to Ali Rezâ, he remained in Isfahan between thirty and forty days.

[z] He was not only refused protection, but threatened with violence by powerful chief who had deserted from his army, if he went to Hamadan but, instead of avoiding that city as he had been advised, he advance rapidly with a few followers, took its ungenerous governor by surprise, slew him, and used his wealth in paying his new levies.

[a] His troops gained several advantages over those of Sâduk Khan, parti-

Sâduk Khan, when he learnt that Ali Moorad was advancing to attack his capital, detached an army (chiefly infantry) to a position about twenty-five miles from Shiraz[b], with orders to oppose his progress: but the different corps of which it was composed quarrelled about the distribution of provisions; and the whole retreated in disorder, pursued by the horse of Ali Moorad Khan, who hastened to take advantage of an occurrence promising important results, as it evinced a want of union and discipline among his adversaries.

Shiraz was blockaded, rather than besieged, for eight months. The assailants had made no progress in destroying the defences; but both the inhabitants and the troops were reduced to such distress for want of supplies, that a spirit of revolt began to display itself: a part of the garrison seized one of the gates, and gave it up to Ali Moorad Khan, whose army immediately took possession of the town[c], but committed no outrage that could cause the inhabitants to regret the desire they had for some time entertained of submitting to his authority.

Sâduk Khan, with his family, retreated to the citadel; but he was soon compelled to surrender, and was put to death[d] with all his sons that had reached manhood, except Jaffier Khan, who had made his terms with the conqueror long before the city was taken. Sâduk had evinced, during the life of his brother, Kerreem, a moderation and judgment which had given a very favourable impression of his disposition; and his conduct at the siege of Bussorah added to his former character, of a respectable man, the

cularly in an action at Abâdâh, where Tâher Khan, the son of Sâduk Khan, commanded the forces of his father.

[b] The village they encamped at was Hâzârbizâ.—ALI REZA's *History of the Zend Family.*

[c] Shiraz was taken on the 18th of Rubbee-ool-awul, A.H. 1195, February A.D. 1781.

[d] Ali Rezâ states, that he was put to death; others say, his eyes were first put out, and then poison administered; while a third account is, that, frantic at the loss of sight, he dashed his brains out.

reputation of a good soldier: but in his latter years we lose all respect for an inactive and indulgent parent, who shutting himself up in his capital, appeared insensible to the incompetence and vices of his sons, and continued to intrust them with the command of armies and the government of provinces, until a general disgust at their misconduct and oppression alienated all minds from his rule. Nor can we deplore the fate of a chief who attained power, by depriving of his crown, and of sight[*], the son of a brother, to whose courage and virtues he and his family were indebted for all they possessed; and whose memory was so revered in Persia, that the inhuman Zuckee Khan had not dared to outrage public feeling by that crime with which Sâduk Khan commenced his unpropitious reign.

Ali Moorad Khan was now sovereign of Persia; and his character and success seemed to promise some years of rest to that disturbed kingdom. Among the chiefs of his army, none had distinguished himself more during the siege, for his courage and conduct, than Ackbar Khan, the son of Zuckee Khan; but we may conclude that he was as cruel and revengeful as he was brave and enterprising, since he not only urged Ali Moorad to put Sâduk Khan with his three younger sons and some of his principal nobles to death, but obtained permission to be their executioner. His eagerness for their fate precipitated his own: he was accused of plotting against the life of the ruler whom he served; and it was not difficult to persuade Ali Moorad of the dangers he had to apprehend from his ambitious cousin. He believed, or affected to believe him, guilty; and the prince

[*] Franklin, Olivier, and Waring agree, that the eyes of Abool Fatteh Khan were put out by Sâduk Khan; and it appears almost impossible that the former, who visited Shiraz in 1786, when Jaffier Khan, the son of that prince, was upon the throne, could be mistaken in such a fact. Yet Ali Rezâ, in his History of the Zend Family, distinctly states, that the eyes of this prince and his brothers were put out by Ali Moorad Khan, when he took Shiraz. This is probably an attempt of a partial historian to remove the guilt from a prince whose memory he respected.

their father. But though he elevated these youths to nominal sovereignty, he himself assumed the substance of power, on the pretext of being, from affinity of blood, their natural guardian, they, from their age, being incompetent to the management of public affairs. He was supported in all his pretensions by his nephew, Ali Moorâd Khan[q], a chief of reputation; and their mutual efforts were directed to the reduction of the citadel. This was not an easy task; so, to avert the dangers of a protracted siege, Zuckee Khan had recourse to treachery[r]. He solemnly pledged his faith to the nobles who defended it, and not only promised to forgive all that had passed, but to admit them to a share of the highest offices in the state. They believed his professions, submitted, and were instantly seized, and put to death in the most inhuman manner[s].

Sâduk Khan, on hearing of the death of Kerreem Khan, evacuated Bussorah, and advanced toward Shiraz. When he arrived near that city, he encamped his army, and sent his son, Jaffier Khan, to wait upon Zuckee Khan, and discover his sentiments about the future settling of the government. The youth probably went to this conference with a mind not free from prejudice[t]: when he returned, he told his father, that, though every word Zuckee Khan had uttered breathed friendship and cordiality, he felt convinced, from what he had observed in the expression of his countenance, and from

[q] The son of the daughter of Boodâk and Byâghâ, and consequently the nephew of Zuckee Khan.

[r] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[s] Captain Franklin, who visited Shiraz seven years after, informs us, he was told by an eye-witness that these chiefs were butchered in presence of Zuckee Khan by the common Pehlwans, or public wrestlers of the city, who performed on this occasion the parts of executioners. He adds, that the same person assured him he saw a Turkuman soldier not only bathe his hands in their blood, but, taking some in his joined palms, drink a little, and with the remainder wash his beard, exclaiming, "Shooker Ullah!" or "Thanks be to God!" The savage meant to recommend himself to the monster whom he served, as one that delighted "to drink the blood of the enemies of his chief."

[t] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

the looks and manners of all around him, that if he went into the city, he would share the fate of the unfortunate nobles, who had been recently duped to their destruction by his treacherous arts[u]. This made the impression intended on Sâduk; who, abandoning all thoughts of an union of interest with his dangerous relation, prepared to besiege Shiraz, and appeared confident of success, from the number and supposed attachment of his troops; but he had to encounter an able and resolute soldier, and one more versed than himself in those daring and decided measures which so often command success. Zuckee Khan, when he despaired of overcoming him by treachery, imprisoned Abool Fatteh Khan, the eldest son of Kerreem Khan, whom he suspected of being well-affected to his uncle's interests, and proclaimed Mahomed Ali Khan[x], who had before only shared with his brother the name of king, sole monarch of Persia. He at the same time made prisoners three sons[y] of Sâduk Khan, who were in Shiraz; and, having shut the gates of the city, threatened with instant disgrace and death all the families of the officers and soldiers who should continue to adhere to his enemy. The effect was what he had anticipated. The terror entertained of his boldness and cruelty banished every hope that he would hesitate to execute his threats, and all the officers of Sâduk Khan's army, whose families were in the power of his enemy, deserted their chief, to save from ruin and death those who were dearer to them[z]. The brother of the late monarch, and the conqueror of Bussorah, found that all his plans were defeated. Only three hundred men remained attached to his fortune; with these he fled to Kerman. A body of horse was sent to cut off his retreat.

[u] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

[x] This prince, as has been before stated, was the son-in-law of Zuckee Khan.

[y] Their names were Mahomed Tuckee Khan, Ali Nuckee Khan, and Hoossein Khan.

[z] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

to advance into Irak, "Let us wait till that respectable blind gentleman[m] (so he always called Ali Moorad, who had lost one of his eyes) is out of the way; then, but not before, we may succeed in such an enterprise."

Five days elapsed from the death of Ali Moorad till the arrival of Jaffier Khan at Isfahan, during which period the name and ensigns of royalty were usurped by Bauker Khan, the governor of the city; a vain, imprudent man, who appears to have had no means of supporting his pretensions. He fled at Jaffier Khan's approach, but was pursued and taken; and his ambition only obtained him the distinction of sharing the imprisonment of the relations of his late sovereign. The person whose pretensions Jaffier Khan had most cause to apprehend, was Shaikh Vais, the son of the deceased monarch. He addressed a letter to that prince in the friendliest terms; but having deluded him within his power, the mask was thrown off, and the confiding youth was deprived of sight, to prevent his ever disturbing the reign of his treacherous uncle.

Aga Mahomed kept the promise he had often made to his followers, of leading them into the plains of Irak on the death of Ali Moorad. The moment intelligence of that desired event reached him, he issued from the mountains of Mazenderan, accompanied by only five or six hundred men; and as he found his numbers hourly increased by the junction of his own adherents, and of disaffected chiefs, he pushed boldly on toward Isfahan, satisfied that decided success alone could keep an army so composed together. It is affirmed by some[n] that he had a secret correspondence with several of the principal nobles; but there had been little time for such intrigues, as he was at Asterabad when

[m] I have been assured by many who had heard Aga Mahomed speak of Ali Moorad, that he always called him the *koor mootáshukus*, or "the respectable blind man."

[n] Olivier states, that he was invited by Bauker Khan, but gives no authority for this assertion. The fact is not confirmed in any history or memoir of this period that I have perused.

Ali Moorad died; and in little more than two months from that date he entered Isfahan[o], whence Jaffier Khan fled at his approach in such confusion, that his baggage, treasure, and even the ensigns of royalty, were plundered by the rabble[p] of the capital. While his formidable rival was establishing himself at Isfahan, Jaffier Khan was welcomed to Shiraz. The fidelity of Syud Moorad[q], the governor of that city, was very doubtful; but the allegiance of its inhabitants had been preserved by the influence of their magistrates. The most active of these was Hajee Ibrahim, who was immediately promoted by his grateful sovereign to the high office of kalanter, or chief civil magistrate of Fars.

Aga Mahomed Khan did not remain long in possession of his conquest. An unsuccessful attack made on some tribes of mountaineers[r], led the fluctuating bands, who had been the instruments of his success, to desert what they deemed his falling fortunes. He was thus obliged to make a precipitate retreat to Teheran; and while he was forming a more efficient force, Jaffier Khan repossessed himself of Isfahan[s]: but the advance of Aga Mahomed obliged him again to abandon it; and the remainder of his reign was a defensive war against that ruler, who, master of almost all Irak, annually threatened an attack on Shiraz.

Jaffier Khan had not been more successful in repressing

[o] He entered on the 6th of May. The distance from Asterabad is four hundred miles.

[p] We are told, that the rabble, who plundered Jaffier Khan's baggage, were encouraged and led by some nobles escaped from prison; among these was Bauker Khan, who has been before mentioned. This chief had not only been imprisoned, but severely beaten by Jaffier Khan, to make him discover his wealth.

[q] Syud Moorad Khan was the nephew of Ali Moorad.

[r] He attacked the Bukhteeârees, who inhabit the great ranges near the capital, and whose complete reduction had hardly been effected by the energy of Nâdir Shah: since Nâdir's death they had maintained their former rude independence.

[s] Raheem Khan, the governor, defended the citadel for some time, and when taken, was put to death.—ALI REZA'S *History of the Zend Family*.

the rebellion of his own subjects, than in opposing foreign enemies. His relation, Ismael Khan[t], whom he had intrusted with the government of Hamadan, revolted, and defeated the army[u] which he led against him. He was also repulsed with considerable loss from the city of Yezd[x] which he made an effort to reduce. But in the beginning of the last year of his reign, fortune seemed more favourable. His son, Lootf Ali Khan, had made a successful expedition into the mountains of Lâr; encouraged by Aga Mahomed Khan's absence, he marched with a considerable force to Isfahan, and defeated the troops left for its defence. But his triumph was short: a report of his formidable rival's approach obliged him to evacuate that city, which was never again possessed by a prince of the Zend family.

We are informed by an authority[y] to which we cannot refuse credit, that Jaffier Khan was kind to his subjects, and gracious to strangers; that his temper was mild, and that he was inclined to justice. This favorable account of a luxurious prince, enjoying himself at a moment of comparative repose, whose affairs were at that period administered by a wise and popular minister[z], is not irreconcilable to the character we are disposed to form of him, from contemplating the events of his life; nor are the negative virtues ascribed to him at variance with those charges of cowardly weakness and meditated treachery, which have been affixed to his memory. There can be no doubt that

[t] Ismael Khan was a cousin of Jaffier Khan. His father, a brother of Kerreem Khan, died during the life of that ruler.

[u] This action took place on the 2d of March, 1786. The victory is chiefly ascribed to Khoosroo Khan, the Waly of Ardelân, who brought a large corps of Kûrds to the aid of Ismael.

[x] The governor of that city, Tuckee Khan, was aided by the independent chief of Tubbus, a neighbouring town in Khorassan.

[y] Franklin, who resided for some time at Shiraz during his reign.

[z] His name was Meerza Hoossein, a most respectable man. He was the father of Meerza Boozoorg, the prime minister of the Prince Abbas Meerza, the heir apparent of Persia.

the total disregard which he showed to the honour of one of his most faithful and distinguished leaders, and to his own pledged faith, led to his becoming the indirect instrument of his own destruction, and gave to the blow of his assassin the colour of justice.

Among the chiefs who served him, none was more distinguished than Hajee Ali Kooli, of Kazeroon. This nobleman had been sent to quell a serious revolt in the country to the east of Cashan. He had subdued the leader[a] against whom he had been detached: among his prisoners was a corps of fifteen hundred Khorassan infantry; who, after defending themselves bravely, had capitulated on the express condition of being honourably treated. Jaffier Khan refused to ratify this agreement, and directed that the men should be deprived of their arms, and thrown into prison[b]. In vain his general represented that this act would be alike impolitic and disgraceful. His remonstrances were disregarded; and his earnest request that his honour might be preserved from the stain which so flagrant a breach of promise would entail on him, was treated with slight, if not with contempt. The indignant chief resolved to quit the service of a monarch who had sacrificed his reputation. He left the army, accompanied by all his followers[c]; and, notwithstanding the alternate threats and entreaties of his monarch, retired to Kazeroon[d]. It is probable that Jaffier Khan had not power at the moment of preventing[e] this act of open contumacy; but he soon sent an army to reduce Hajee Ali Kooli to obedience. This leader who, subsequently to his departure from camp, had refused to obey a

[a] The name of this chief was Mahomed Hoossein Khan, Arab. He was aided by Meer Mahomed Khan of Tubbus.

[b] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

[c] These were almost all infantry.

[d] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend Family.

[e] It is possible that the chiefs of his army would have refused to act against Hajee Ali Kooli when the question was one of personal honour, and evidently unmixed with any desire of revolt.

summons to attend court, was at last persuaded to yield: he did not however consent to go to Shiraz, until the monarch had sworn upon the Koran that he would not offer him the slightest injury: but Jaffier Khan could not forgive a man whom he had so deeply wronged; he seized him, and unmindful of his faith, threw him into a prison, where he was doomed to linger out the remainder of his existence. Rendered desperate, the chief of Kazeroon entered into a conspiracy with some other prisoners to destroy the despot by whom he had been so cruelly treated. Among these, Syud Moorad Khan[f], from his high birth and former employment, had the most influence. When the plot was ripe for execution, a slave who had been bribed, managed to convey poison[g] into the victuals of Jaffier Khan; and when he was writhing under its effects, the prisoners were released by their friends, and rushing into his chamber, put an end to his existence. The head of their sovereign, thrown from the citadel into the square before its gate, announced to the inhabitants of Shiraz that their ruler was no more.

Lootf Ali Khan, the son of Jaffier Khan, was in Kerman when his father was murdered; and Syud Moorad Khan, through the influence of the conspirators, was proclaimed king; but he only reigned a few months. Hajee Ibrahim, the principal magistrate of Shiraz, who was warmly attached to the cause of the absent prince, disposed a number of the inhabitants and chiefs of tribes to the same interest: and Lootf Ali Khan, who, on receiving the first intelligence

[f] Syud Moorad, who had been Governor of Shiraz, was first trusted and employed, and afterwards confined, by Jaffier Khan; who ordered him to be beaten severely, to compel him to discover his riches.—Franklin.

[g] I here follow the History of Ali Rezâ, who is very particular, and, I have no doubt, correct, in his account of the death of Jaffier Khan. Waring states, that the poison was administered by a female slave, who had formerly belonged to Syud Moorad Khan. Olivier (vol. vi. p. 209) asserts, that this prince had taken medicines to lessen his corpulence, and that they had reduced him to a state of debility and suffering, which made it easy for the conspirators to attack and overcome him.

of what had occurred, had fled from the uncertain fidelity of his own troops to the Shaikh of Abusheher, was soon enabled to assert his claim to the crown of his father. The Arab chief, who had granted him protection and aid, died immediately after his arrival at Abusheher; but with his last breath he charged his son[h] to devote himself to Lootf Ali Khan, whose small army, when he first took the field, was almost entirely formed of the followers of this petty ruler. The approach of a considerable corps under the brother[i] of Syud Moorad threatened destruction to this force; but the second in command[k] being attached to Hajee Ibrahim, prevailed on the soldiers to seize their general, and declare in favour of the prince whom they were sent to oppose. Encouraged by this event, Lootf Ali Khan hastened to the capital, where the influence of his friends had been so effectually exerted, that he was welcomed by the unanimous voice of its inhabitants. Syud Moorad Khan, who had shut himself up in the citadel, was soon compelled to surrender, and suffered death: but Hajee Ali Kooli, whose defection from that cause, which resentment and despair had led him to adopt, was essential to the success of this revolution, had, with several others, received solemn assurances of pardon from Hajee Ibrahim; and Lootf Ali Khan, on his accession, not only confirmed these promises, but marked with favour and confidence those to whom they were made.

Before we proceed with the history of Lootf Ali Khan, it appears proper to say a few words on the origin and rise of a man, whose name became so conspicuous in the annals of his country. Hajee Ibrahim was the son of Hajee Hâshem[l],

[h] Shaikh Nâsser, who was till very lately the chief of Abusheher, and is since dead.

[i] Shah Moorad.

[k] His name was Ali Himmut Khan.

[l] The name of Hajee Hâshem is still held in great respect in his native city. When Nâdir Shah encamped there, this magistrate gave him an entertainment in the garden of *Dil Gooshâ*, near the tomb of Sadi. This

a respectable magistrate of Shiraz, who having lost his eyesight through age was, during his latter years, unfit for business, and left a large family in very low, if not distressed circumstances: but his son, Hajee Ibrahim, early became a magistrate in one of the wards of his native city; and his manly character, in which good temper and good sense were combined with extraordinary fortitude, raised him rapidly into high employment. He had been placed in the situation of his father by Kerreem Khan, and promoted to a higher charge [m] by Ali Moorad: as it was chiefly owing to his exertions that Jaffier Khan obtained such easy possession of Shiraz when forced to fly from Isfahan, he (as has been before stated) raised Hajee Ibrahim to the high station of kalanter, or first magistrate of Fars; and the influence of that situation enabled him to repay his debt of gratitude to the father, by placing his son upon the throne.

No event could appear more propitious to the happiness of his country, or more likely to restore the fallen fortunes of his family than the elevation of Lootf Ali Khan. Although not yet twenty years of age, he had been matured by continual employment during his father's reign, and was already ranked, in the estimation of both friends and enemies, among the bravest and best soldiers of his country. His appearance was singularly calculated to win that admiration which his qualities commanded: his countenance was beautiful, and full of animated expression; his form tall and graceful; though slender, he was active and strong. In skill as a horseman, and in dexterity at all martial exercises, he was unrivalled; nor was he deemed wanting in the mental qualities which his situation required. He had displayed on several occasions as much conduct as courage. Before he

event, which flattered the vanity of the family, as it proved the consequence of Hajee Hâshem, is related in the History of Hajee Ibrahim; and his son, Meerza Mahomed Khan gave me an entertainment in 1800, on the same spot where, as he took care to inform me, his grandfather had feasted Nâdir Shah and his court about seventy years before.

[m] He was made magistrate of all the Hyderee mâhâls, or wards termed Hyderee, which include more than half the city.

ascended the throne, his manners were kind and prepossessing, particularly to his inferiors; but soon after he obtained power, his disposition changed, and his mind appears to have lost some of its best qualities. He was no longer mild and conciliating, but proud and self-sufficient. The gratitude and esteem he expressed, and probably felt at the moment, for Hajee Ibrahim, whose attachment to his cause had enabled him to attain the throne, gave way to alarm and suspicion. Nor was it surprising that he should have viewed with more jealousy than regard the subject who had shown himself possessed of the dangerous power of placing the crown upon his head.

Lootf Ali Khan was hardly established in the government, before Aga Mahomed Khan advanced to attack him. The young prince ventured to meet his enemies in the field[n]: but he was defeated by superior numbers, and forced to fly to Shiraz. The Kajir prince, encouraged by his success, invested that city; but, after a vain endeavour during more than a month to make some impression upon its defences, he raised the siege, and returned to Teheran, now become the capital of his kingdom.

The next year Lootf Ali Khan, expecting a repetition of this attack, made formidable preparations to resist it: but Aga Mahomed Khan was occupied in Aderbejan; and the young ruler of Fars, unwilling that the force he had collected should remain idle, resolved to march into Kerman, and compel the governor[o] to submit to his authority. The season of operations was almost past; and the prudent counsellors of Lootf Ali Khan urged him to accept the terms offered by the chief of Kerman, which included the full acknowledgment of his authority, the regular payment of the revenue of the province, and every submission that could be required of him, except his personal attendance at court.

[n] This battle was fought at a village called Hâzârbizâ, within six fersekhs, or twenty-five miles, of Shiraz.

[o] The name of this chief was Hoossein Khan Khâkee.

But on this the impetuous prince insisted; and, with a view of enforcing it, laid siege during a very severe winter to the city of Kerman. He was discomfited, his historian[p] informs us, not by the garrison, but by the elements. Almost all the horses, and many of the men in his army, perished through cold and hunger; for when the snow became deep, it was impossible to furnish his camp with regular supplies. Compelled by the defection of some of his troops, and the clamorous discontent of all, to raise the siege of Kerman, he returned to Shiraz, sullen and irascible from the reverse he had sustained.

Before he set out on this unfortunate expedition, he appointed one of his younger brothers, who was quite a child, to the nominal rule of Fars; but he had at the same time committed the civil government of Shiraz, and the countries in its vicinity, to Hajee Ibrahim. The command of the garrison, with separate powers, was given to a chief of his own tribe, called Burkhoodâr Khan; and the ark, or citadel, was placed in charge of another nobleman of the Zend family. This division of authority, meant to guard against treachery, only promoted it. Burkhoodâr Khan, a weak and arrogant man, vain of his rank and of his independent power over the military, insisted, but without effect, on Hajee Ibrahim paying him all those submissive attentions, which in Persia are considered due to a superior. Offended at what he deemed a personal insult, he laboured to impress his prince with the belief, that such marked disrespect for a lord of the Zend family, could only be shewn by one who cherished traitorous designs. If these representations were not altogether believed, they made a serious impression on the irritated mind of Lootf Ali; and every act, after his return from Kerman, proved that he had no longer the same respect or confidence in his minister.

An occurrence some time before this had greatly weakened that reliance which Hajee Ibrahim was at first disposed

[p] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

to place in his sovereign. Lootf Ali Khan, at his earnest solicitation, had pardoned a number of persons supposed to be concerned in the conspiracy against his father. Among these was Meerza Mehdee, who had been formerly employed by Jaffier Khan[q]; but, on being discovered in some peculation, was disgraced, and condemned to lose his ears. When the head of Jaffier Khan was thrown from the citadel, it had been exposed to a thousand indignities; and, according to popular rumour, Meerza Mehdee had cut off the ears. He had always denied this accusation; and Hajee Ibrahim, who professed to be persuaded of his innocence, solicited his pardon of Lootf Ali Khan, who not only granted it, but said, even if the accusation were true, he freely forgave the meerza from the consideration he had for his mediator. Several months after, when the prince was distributing honorary dresses, one was given to Meerza Mehdee. This was reported to his mother, who sent for him, and asked, if it was not enough that he should be required to forgive the murderers of his father. "Is it necessary," she added, "that you should degrade yourself by bestowing marks of regard and favour on a wretch who mutilated his remains[r]?" This upbraiding language had the effect intended on the violent temper of the prince. He returned to his court, summoned Meerza Mehdee, and, after reproaching him with his crime[s], directed him to be thrown into a fire. Hajee Ibrahim had been sent for, but arrived only in time to hear from the prince what he had done, and to see with horror the remains of the man whose pardon had been so fully granted to his intercession[t].

[q] He was Lashkur-novees, the duties of which office are, to keep a register of the troops, and to transact all business relative to their pay.

[r] Persian MS.

[s] Lootf Ali Khan demanded of Meerza Mehdee, what that man deserved who could behave ill to his sovereign and benefactor. "To be burnt alive," was the reply. "You are the man," said the prince; and directed him to be instantly thrown into a fire.—*Persian MS.*

[t] Hajee Ibrahim related to me the particulars of this event, in almost the same words in which I find them written in his history. He assured me,

The mutual distrust which had arisen between the sovereign and the minister became apparent to all. Lootf Ali Khan could ill brook the restraint under which he acted; but he could not venture on an open attack of one whose influence he dreaded: for, besides the devoted attachment which the citizens of Shiraz were known to entertain for him, many governors of provinces and chiefs of tribes were warmly attached to his interest, and his brothers commanded the principal corps of infantry with the army. But though the prince refrained from violence, every action showed his feelings; and the minister, satisfied that his existence was at stake, determined to overthrow a prince, "from whom he had ceased," in his own words, "to expect any thing but death [u]."

When affairs were in this situation, Lootf Ali Khan, who had resolved upon advancing to Isfahan, made the same arrangements for a division of authority at Shiraz, as when he proceeded to Kerman: and with a chief of his own family [x] in charge of the garrison, and another in command of the citadel, he considered that he had nothing to fear from his minister; but still he could not avoid showing a distrust of his fidelity. After he had publicly nominated him to the civil government, when the army was on the eve of marching, he ordered his eldest son, Meerza Mahomed, to be sent to camp, where, as he was too young to be employed, he was evidently meant to be a hostage for his father's conduct. If Hajee Ibrahim had before entertained doubts regarding the light in which he was viewed, they were removed by this ill-timed act of suspicion; and he appears to have decided on the immediate execution of a plan, which he had

he did not believe the man guilty of what popular rumour accused him of; and added, "From the moment this act was committed, I lost all confidence in Lootf Ali Khan."

[u] MS. History of Hajee Ibrahim.

[x] Burkhoodâr was appointed, as before, to the command of the garrison and the charge of the police. Mahomed Ali Khan, Zend, had charge of the citadel.

for some time contemplated, of making over Shiraz to Aga Mahomed Khan, and thus rendering him the sole ruler of Persia.

Hajee Ibrahim perhaps persuaded himself[y], that by this treason he was only anticipating an event which must occur, and saving his country from a protracted war between two rival families; but there can be no doubt that his real motive was self-preservation. He had lost all confidence in Lootf Ali Khan. He knew that he had many enemies, incessant in their endeavours to destroy him; and he perceived, from the conduct of the prince, that their representations had made all the impression they could desire. Under these circumstances, he sought to preserve his life, and to place himself, by a signal service, under the protection of a powerful monarch. He was successful: but his memory is stained with the reproach of having destroyed a family to which he owed all his advancement.

When Lootf Ali Khan had advanced some marches on his way to Isfahan, Hajee Ibrahim, with a small corps of citizens which he had formed and placed under the command of his youngest brother, Mahomed Hussein Khan, seized the two noblemen[z] left in charge of the garrison and citadel of Shiraz; and, so well were his measures taken, this was effected without bloodshed. An account of his success was despatched to one of his brothers[a] with the army, which, when the messenger arrived, was encamped[b] within twenty

[y] In his conversations with me on the reasons which influenced his conduct at this period, Hajee Ibrahim always declared, that a desire to save his country from continual petty wars was one of his principal motives. "None," said he, "except some plundering soldiers cared whether a Zend or a Kajir was upon the throne; but all desired that Persia should be great and powerful, and enjoy internal tranquillity."

[z] Burkhoodâr Khan and Mahomed Ali Khan. They were invited to a consultation on some affairs regarding the civil administration, and seized as they were seated at the hajee's house.

[a] Abdool Raheem Khan.

[b] Lootf Ali Khan was encamped at a village within five fersekhs of Koomeshâ, to which the troops of Aga Mahomed Khan had advanced.

miles of the forces of Aga Mahomed Khan, commanded by his nephew, then known by the familiar appellation of Bâbâ Khan [c]. The brother of Hajee Ibrahim communicated the intelligence to his friends, and to the chiefs concerned in the plot; and it was settled that, immediately after dark, some of the infantry should fire upon Lootf Ali Khan's quarters; and that this fire, accompanied by a great noise, should be the signal for the friends of Hajee Ibrahim to assemble. The moment the first shot was heard, loud shouts followed from every quarter of the camp, and bodies of men began to move. The prince, astonished and enraged, sent messenger after messenger to inquire the cause of the uproar. These at last returned and advised him to mount his horse and escape, as his own troops had become his enemies. None of his principal officers would attend his summons: one chief [d] alone, and seventy men, continued with him. Accompanied by this small party, he proceeded towards his capital, of which he was satisfied that his friends still retained possession. On the second day after he left the camp, he received information of all that had passed; but being now joined by about three hundred horsemen, he moved boldly on to the gates of Shiraz, and sent a person to demand of Hajee Ibrahim the reason of his conduct. "Inform Lootf Ali Khan," said that minister calmly, "that I knew his intentions, and had no mode of saving my life but by depriving him of the power to take it away. Advise him to abandon all hope of repossessing Shiraz, and bid him think only of saving himself by flight [e]." But the proud prince, who had already been joined by a number of his troops, scorned the advice. "The traitor," said he, "after

[c] Bâbâ Khan was the name by which the present sovereign of Persia was known till the death of his uncle. His proper name was Fatteh Ali Khan; but Aga Mahomed was in the habit of terming him *Bâbâ*, or "child;" and the name continued to be given to him after he attained manhood. He was at this period twenty-two years of age.

[d] Tâmâsp Khan Fylee.

[e] MS. History of Hajee Ibrahim.

all, is but a citizen[f], and his force consists merely of a few shopkeepers, who can never withstand brave soldiers." Supported by these expectations, he encamped near the walls of the city; but that policy which had placed the families of the soldiers in the capital, now gave great advantage to Hajee Ibrahim: he called on the few troops still with their monarch to return immediately to their homes if they desired the safety of those whom they loved. The appeal had full effect: the deserted Lootf Ali Khan was compelled to fly, with four or five attendants, to Abusheher. He found, however, that the shaikh of that place was no longer his friend. That chief was devoted to Hajee Ibrahim. But he met with a kind reception, and all the aid his limited means could afford, from the governor of the neighbouring port of Bunder Reeg; and was enabled by this support to collect a few followers, with whom he resolved to attempt the recovery of Shiraz.

The want of numbers in the army of Lootf Ali Khan was remedied by his own heroism, and by the valour of those who adhered to his fortunes. His first success was over the troops of the Shaikh of Abusheher[g]. His next action was with the governor of Kazeroon[h], whom he made prisoner and deprived of sight. This act of cruelty was very injurious to his interests; for while it made a powerful family his implacable enemies, it weakened that sympathy which his youth, his courage, and his misfortunes, were so calculated to excite.

[f] Shâheree, or citizen, is used in Persia as a term of contempt, to signify unwarlike, the soldiers being all men of wandering tribes.

[g] This action, if such it can be termed, was fought at a village called Tangestân. The cavalry under Rizâ Kooli Khan deserted him and joined Lootf Ali Khan; and the Bushire infantry fled before they were attacked. —Ali Reza's *History*.

[h] Hajee Ali Kooli Khan of Kazeroon, who had been pardoned by Lootf Ali Khan on his ascending the throne, had been subsequently compelled to fly to Aga Mahomed Khan. His brother, Rizâ Kooli Khan, was governor, and had offended Lootf Ali Khan by plundering part of his baggage and some favorite horses when he fled from Shiraz.

Lootf Ali Khan, encouraged by these successes, once more appeared before Shiraz, and commenced a blockade, which he was unable to besiege, having neither infantry nor cannon. The unsubdued spirit he had evinced gained him many followers; and his friends began to indulge sanguine hopes of the re-establishment of his power. But the daring valour and unwearied efforts of the young prince were opposed by a man, whose wisdom removed danger by measures of anticipation, and whose firmness, tempered by moderation, gave no unnecessary irritation to his enemies, while it secured the constancy and attachment of his adherents. The extraordinary character of this wonderful man was perhaps more fully displayed by his conduct on this critical occasion, than by any other action of his eventful life.

After the revolt of his troops had forced Lootf Ali Khan to fly from that army with which he had hoped to conquer Isfahan in the preceding year, they had returned in disorder to Shiraz; and their arrival had increased the number of men belonging to the military tribes[1] of Fars within its walls, to about twelve thousand. The infantry, or city militia, composed of shopkeepers and artificers, did not amount to a fifth of this number: yet these were the only troops from whom Hajee Ibrahim could expect support; for it was impossible that tribes, whose fortunes were dependent on the continuance of the Zend dynasty, could ever consent to what he intended,—the transfer of the supreme power to the chief of the Kajirs. Convinced that they would oppose the execution of his plan, Hajee Ibrahim resolved on disarming and expelling from Shiraz this multitude of soldiers. He took his measures with a precaution and promptitude which eluded all suspicion. Having given orders to secure the streets which led by a back way from his house to the gate of the city, he sent notice to the mili-

[1] They are termed Eelyáts, or "tribes," are all soldiers, and generally horsemen. The cities furnish to the army only infantry: they are defended by a militia, which sometimes takes the field.

tary tribes to be ready, at an appointed time, to receive a donation. They assembled as directed, and a hundred[k] were admitted at a time into the interior court of his mansion. From the height of the walls round it, those who were without could know nothing of what was passing within. The first party admitted found themselves surrounded, but were told that no injury was intended to them if they resigned their arms: they did so; and while these were given to citizens to increase the corps on which Hajee Ibrahim could depend, the unarmed soldiers were conducted, by the back way before mentioned, beyond the gates of the town. The whole were disarmed, and party after party joined their astonished companions under the walls. However extraordinary it may appear, this measure was executed without confusion or bloodshed. When the whole body were expelled, they were directed to proceed to some villages in the vicinity. Unable to resist, they were forced to obey. Some joined Lootf Ali Khan; others remained at their places of destination, watching the progress of events.

Hajee Ibrahim wrote to Aga Mahomed Khan the moment he had seized Shiraz; and that chief sent a general[l] with a strong detachment to his support; but Lootf Ali Khan took the first opportunity of attacking this corps, and, after a severe contest, defeated it. Aga Mahomed, alarmed at this intelligence, ordered a force[m] to Shiraz, which he conceived from its superior numbers must terminate the war. This body, after being joined by the troops in garrison, marched to attack Lootf Ali Khan, whose small army they outnumbered more than ten to one[n]. The brave prince did not decline the combat; but left his entrenchments, and drew his men up in some gardens, with the double view of occupying a strong position, and concealing his numbers from observation. The action, at its commencement, was

[k] Some accounts say only fifty: the difference is of little consequence.
[l] Moostáphá Khan.
[m] He gave the command to Ján Mahomed Khan and Rizá Kooli Khan.
[n] Ali Rezá's History of the Zend family.

favorable to his enemies, who drove his men from their position, and pursued them to some distance: but Lootf Ali Khan, who possessed eminent talents as a commander, observed that they had commenced to plunder the camp he had abandoned; and, judging the opportunity favorable, he made a resolute and successful charge with a body of horse whom he had rallied. His repulsed troops, encouraged by the gallantry of their chief, returned to the charge, and the enemy gave way in every quarter. The victory was complete; and it was rendered more decisive from Rizā Kooli Khan, one of the Kajir leaders, being among the prisoners.

Hajee Ibrahim, who perceived in these repeated successes a dangerous increase of reputation to Lootf Ali Khan, wrote to Aga Mahomed, urging him to advance in person. That monarch, sensible of the importance of the crisis, moved with a large force[o] towards Shiraz. Although his numbers exceeded those opposed to him in a proportion of nearly a hundred to one, he proceeded with a caution which proved that he thought there was much to apprehend from the bold enterprise of his enemy: nor was he mistaken. When he arrived at a village[p] near the ruins of Persepolis, his camp was suddenly attacked by Lootf Ali Khan: animated with a courage equal to that of any hero who had ever feasted in those halls, he had determined to make one great struggle for the crown of Persia. He surprised the advanced guard of Aga Mahomed Khan, and defeated it, and, following the fugitives to their camp with only a few hundred men, attacked upwards of thirty thousand. The darkness of the night, the fears communicated by those who fled, and the terror of his name, created a dismay and confusion which

[o] Some authors state that he had forty thousand men; but this is an exaggeration.

[p] The name of this village is Mâyen. It is about sixty miles from Shiraz, and thirty-one from Persepolis. Aga Mahomed reached this encampment on the fourteenth of Shâwâl, in the year of the Hijrah 1206.

promised complete success[q]. Almost the whole of Aga Mahomed Khan's army dispersed; the assailants had arrived at the royal quarters, when a chief, who had joined Lootf Ali Khan, assured him that the Kajir monarch was among the fugitives, and entreated that he would not lose the wealth he had so nobly won, by permitting his followers to plunder the jewels and treasures of an empire[r]. This chief[s] was unfortunately believed. Lootf Ali Khan directed his men to halt, and not to enter the royal pavilion; they obeyed, but dispersed to plunder in other directions. When that morning dawned which was to have beheld him a conqueror, he heard with dismay the public crier in the enemy's camp call to prayers[t]; this announced to those who remained of Aga Mahomed Khan's army that their sovereign was at his post. He had never left it. When he found it impossible to remedy the confusion into which his troops were thrown, he had remained stationary at his quarters, surrounded by some of his guards, expecting, from the small numbers of the enemy, and their want of discipline, the very event which occurred. Lootf Ali Khan, awakened from his dream of victory, found himself compelled to fly with all the speed he could, to save himself from being made prisoner.

This daring attempt to recover his power ought not to be deemed an act of desperate temerity, in whieh success was impossible. He well knew from experience, that in an army such as that which he attacked, confusion, if once introduced, was likely to be irremediable. He also knew that many chiefs of tribes were fluctuating between him and Aga Mahomed Khan. These leaders always acted on the

[q] He killed the leader, Ibrahim Khan, and a great number of his party: they were posted in the pass between the villages of Mâyen and Alboorz.

[r] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend family.

[s] His name was Meerza Fatteh Ollâ Ardillanee. Some historians declare that he was sincere; others assert that he was the emissary of Aga Mahomed Khan.

[t] This is never done except when the king commands in person.

impulse of the moment; and as the part they took was blindly adopted by their followers, he had a right to expect that brilliant success would turn the tide in his favour, and that he should overcome his enemies with the very means they had collected for his destruction. The plan of attack was able: he proceeded with every caution, and completely surprised the advance corps. The advantage he took of his first success showed his skill and determined courage. Victory was snatched from him by one of those incidents which have so often decided the fate of battles and of empires.

If Lootf Ali Khan deserved success, Aga Mahomed Khan had also merited the crown which this day fixed upon his brow. He had evinced, amid consternation and confusion, all that calm resolution and self-possession which marked his extraordinary character. His mind loved to dwell on these events; and he used often to observe, that in the modern History of Persia three achievements alone were worthy of being transmitted to posterity [u]. First, the policy and firmness of Hajee Ibrahim, who, with a few shop-keepers, took Shiraz, and maintained it for months against all the warlike tribes of that province. Secondly, the daring heroism of Lootf Ali Khan, who, with four or five hundred men, ventured to attack an army of thirty thousand; and, lastly, the fortitude he himself had displayed, in remaining at his quarters when all around him fled; and that calmness in danger which made him direct the common crier to announce morning prayers in the usual manner, that both his own army and his enemy might learn he was at his post, undisturbed by all that had passed.

The flight of Lootf Ali Khan was continued until he reached Kerman, where he began again to collect followers: but Aga Mahomed Khan, who had marched to Shiraz, sent an army [x] to attack him; and the few men who had joined him

[u] Persian MS.

[x] The cavalry of this force was commanded by Wullee Mahomed Khan, Kajir, and the infantry by Abdool Raheem Khan, brother to Hajee Ibrahim.

dispersed, considering his fortunes as desperate. The deserted prince fled to Khorassan[y], which, since the death of Nâdir Shah, had remained subject to a number of independent chiefs. One of these, Meer Hoossein Khan, who ruled over the city and district of Tubbus, offered his protection to the royal fugitive; who, on learning that the jealous policy of Aga Mahomed Khan had destroyed the fortifications of Shiraz, determined to make another effort to reconquer that city. The chief of Tubbus furnished him with two hundred men; with these, and a few faithful followers who had never forsaken him, he marched toward Yezd. The governor[z] of that city sent a corps to oppose him, which Lootf Ali Khan attacked with his usual impetuosity, and defeated. Elated with this success, his small force advanced rapidly upon the village of Aberkoh, on the borders of Fars. It submitted to his authority; and from it he proclaimed to his friends that he was once more in the field. He had still numbers of secret adherents; and the exaggerated reports of his success induced many to declare openly in his favour. In a short time his numbers increased to fifteen hundred men, with whom he besieged Darabjird. This celebrated town, though fallen from its former greatness, is still a place of some consequence, containing from ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants. The importance of such a conquest led Lootf Ali Khan to make every effort for its reduction: but the alarm excited by his reappéarance at the head of an army had spread to Teheran, and a large force was sent against him under a noble[a] of the Kajir tribe, while Hajee Ibrahim detached his youngest brother[b] with a strong corps of infantry to reinforce the garrison of Darabjird[c]. The approach of these troops compelled Lootf Ali Khan to raise the siege and retreat. He endeavoured to

[y] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend family.

[z] Ali Nuckee Khan.

[a] The name of this leader was Mahomed Hoossein Khan, Kajir.

[b] Mahomed Hoossein Khan.

[c] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

make a stand at the fortified village of Rooneez; but, after some days' skirmishing, he was obliged to hazard an action, in which the superior number of his enemies prevailed, and he was compelled once more to seek protection from the ruler of Tubbus. That chief, however, though he received him kindly, began to entertain apprehensions that his friendship, which could not save his guest, might involve himself in his fall. He advised Lootf Ali to proceed to Candahar, and seek the aid of Timoor Shah, the reigning monarch of the Affghans, who alone possessed the power of restoring him to the throne of his ancestors. The prince acquiesced in the wisdom of this advice, and set out on his journey to the court of the Affghan king; but he had proceeded only a few marches, when he heard of Timoor's death, and the intelligence led him to relinquish the design of leaving Persia.

While Lootf Ali Khan hesitated on the course he should next pursue, he received letters from two chiefs of Nermansheer[d], the eastern district of Kerman, entreating him not to abandon his country, and pledging themselves, if he would return, to give him every support in their power[e]. A Persian author has truly remarked, that "the slightest spark always rekindled the flame of hope in the breast of this warrior." He hastened to Nermansheer: encouraged by seeing a few soldiers again assembled round his standard, he formed the daring resolution of making himself master of the city of Kerman. Having approached it by rapid marches, he directed his brave uncle Abdûllâ Khan, the most distinguished of all those who had adhered to his fortunes, to advance with half his force, and make a false attack on the town. He kept the remainder in reserve; and when he saw the attention of the enemy wholly occupied by the corps with Abdûllâ, he led the troops under his immediate command to another part of the fort: being furnished with scaling ladders, they had mounted the walls

[d] The names of these chiefs were Mahomed Khan and Jehangheer Khan.

[e] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

before they were perceived. The garrison, though surprised, made an obstinate resistance; but were ultimately driven from all their posts, and obliged to take shelter in the citadel: even that they were soon compelled to abandon. The officers[f] who commanded in Kerman effected their escape; but a great number of their men were slain, and the whole baggage fell into the hands of the conquerors. Lootf Ali once more assumed the style of a sovereign: coins were struck in his name, to commemorate this last of his glorious achievements. The historian[g] of his reign observes "that the fortune of this prince, like the splendour of the meteor which he resembled, shone brightest at the moment of its close."

Aga Mahomed Khan, when he heard of the fall of Kerman, marched, with all the force he could collect, to encounter a foe who seemed to rise greater from every misfortune. Lootf Ali Khan was not dismayed by the vast superiority of numbers; his soldiers were encouraged by some partial successes, to second his heroic ardour; but after the siege had lasted four months, they began to suffer great distress, and several corps became discontented. One body of infantry, which had charge of some towers, gave them up to the enemy, and between two and three thousand of Aga Mahomed Khan's troops had entered, before the information of this treachery reached Lootf Ali Khan. The moment he heard of it, he hastened to the spot, and, after a severe contest, repulsed the foe[h]; but this was his last success. One of the chiefs[i] in whom he had most confided, determined to betray him. The traitor had charge of the citadel, which joined in one part with the outworks. He opened the gates at this entrance; and Aga Mahomed Khan introduced between ten and twelve thousand men,

[f] These were Mahomed Hoossein Khan Karagoozoloo, the present chief of that tribe, and Abdool Raheem Khan, the brother of Hajee Ibrahim.

[g] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[h] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[i] Nujuff Kooli Khan of Khorassan.

and prepared to support them with his whole army. Lootf Ali Khan, when he heard of this second act of treachery, attacked them with the most determined valour, but in vain: their numbers were too great, and he was obliged to retire, after seeing his bravest followers either slain or put to flight.

Aga Mahomed Khan, whose principal object was to prevent the escape of Lootf Ali, had surrounded Kerman, and posted a strong body of men opposite every gateway. The young prince, beset on all sides, maintained the contest in the town during three hours: at night he crossed the ditch by a small bridge of loose planks, which were removed when they had served their purpose[k]. The lines of the enemy were yet to be passed. He threw himself upon them with a courage that derived energy from despair, and, with three attendants, broke through the troops by whom he was opposed. He fled toward Nermansheer, and reached that district in safety.

When day dawned, and Aga Mahomed found, to use a Persian phrase, that "the lion had burst his toils," he wreaked[l] his vengeance on the unfortunate inhabitants of Kerman: nearly twenty thousand women and children were

[k] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

[l] I find in one of my manuscripts a remarkable anecdote of Aga Mahomed Khan's conduct on this occasion. The meerza or secretary of Lootf Ali was made prisoner, and brought before him. He demanded, how he had dared to write firmauns, or mandates, to him who was a sovereign? "I wrote them," said the man, "by the order of my master, Lootf Ali: my fear of him when present, was greater than my dread of you who were at a distance."—"Strike off his hands, and tear out his eyes!" exclaimed the enraged monarch. The savage order was instantly obeyed. Next day he sent for the son of the man whom he had so inhumanly treated, and said: "Tell your father that the prophet has upbraided me in a dream for my cruel usage of him: what can I do to repair the injuries I have done?"—"He will desire, if he lives," (said the youth,) "to pass the remainder of his days at the tomb of the holy Ali, at Nujuff." The king immediately directed that mules, tents, and every necessary equipment, should be furnished for his journey. He also sent him a present of three hundred tomâns, (about three hundred pounds sterling,) and entreated the young man to solicit his father to forgive him, and to remember him in his prayers.

given as slaves to his soldiers; all the males who had reached maturity were commanded to be put to death, or deprived of their eye-sight. Those who escaped his cruelty, owed their safety neither to mercy nor to flight, but to the fatigue of their executioners, who only ceased to glut the revengeful spirit of their monarch, when themselves exhausted with the work of blood. The numbers slain were great, and exceeded even those deprived of sight; though the latter are said to have amounted to seven thousand [m]. Many of these miserable wretches are still alive. Some, who subsist on charity [n], wander over Persia, and recount to all who will listen the horrors of this day of calamity.

Lootf Ali Khan was at first kindly received by the governor of Nermansheer; but that chief inquired anxiously after his brother, who had accompanied the prince to Kerman [o]: he was told that he would soon arrive: three days, however, passed in anxious expectation, satisfied his mind that, if alive, he was in the power of Aga Mahomed Khan; and he naturally concluded that his fate would be decided by his own conduct on this trying occasion. His love for his brother, and his fears for his own safety, silenced the dictates of honour and good faith: he determined to seize his royal guest, and to offer him as a ransom for the life and pardon of one who was dearer to him. The companions of Lootf Ali discovered this plot just before its execution: they hastened to inform him, and entreated he would escape; but their advice was disregarded; nor was he awakened from

[m] I follow the MS. of a contemporary. When I have asked any chief present at this massacre how many men were deprived of sight, their answer was always, "Many thousands." It has been stated, that Aga Mahomed Khan directed that a number of pounds weight of eyes should be brought to him: nor is the tale in the least incredible.

[n] When at Shiraz on the 4th of June, 1800, I thought the best mode of celebrating the birth-day of our beloved monarch was to distribute alms to the poor: a great number assembled; among them were more than a hundred men whose eyes had been taken out at Kerman.

[o] Ali Rezâ's History of the Zend Family.

his dream of security by seeing those[p] who had remained faithful in every danger, abandon him as one resolved not to avoid death. Soon after, the approach of armed men convinced him that the information was too true. He grasped his sword, and rushed on those who were advancing to seize him. A momentary terror prevailed; and the prince was already on the back of his favorite horse[q], when one of the assailants made a blow with his sabre at the legs of the noble animal, and brought him to the ground. Lootf Ali Khan started up again, and renewed an unequal contest, in which he at last fell, having received two severe wounds, one on his arm, the other on his head. In this state he was carried to the camp of Aga Mahomed Khan. The page of history would be stained[r] by a recital of the indignities offered to the royal captive, when brought to the presence of his cruel and implacable enemy. Suffice it to observe, that his eyes were torn out, and that he was sent a prisoner to Teheran, to languish out a miserable and protracted existence, far from his native province, and from all to whom his name was dear: but the fears of his conqueror made him at last more humane; and an order was sent to terminate the life of a prince, who, even in this wretched state, was still an object of dread[s] to the proudest and most powerful of his enemies.

[p] One of the persons with him, whose name was Khodah-buksh, fled to India. He afterwards obtained a small command of horse in the service of the Nizam of the Deckan, and was attached to a party that served under me in the campaign of 1799 against Seringapatam. The account he gave of the life of Lootf Ali Khan, and of his conduct on this occasion, exactly corresponds with that of Ali Rezá.

[q] The name of this horse was Kurrund. He was of the Arab blood, but bred in Persia. Though a low horse, his activity and strength were wonderful; and credibility is staggered with the accounts given by all Persians of his speed, and of the extraordinary distance to which he at different times carried his royal master, who regarded and treated him with the greatest affection and care.

[r] The brutal insults offered to Lootf Ali when he was carried before Aga Mahomed are too shocking to be described. The English reader would revolt from the narration of a scene which disgraced human nature.

[s] Though Aga Mahomed Khan cherished implacable resentment against

Lootf Ali Khan closed his extraordinary career before he was twenty-five years of age. There is in the character of this young prince, and in the events of his life, what must excite both pity and admiration; but, amid the blaze of his achievements, we can discover nothing but the qualities of a soldier. Had he been born to the undisputed sovereignty of a large kingdom at a period when allegiance to the reigning prince was at once a habit and a principle, his fame might have emulated that of a Chenghiz or a Timoor. But in the condition of his country at the time when he succeeded to the throne, every quality he possessed, except his personal valour and his ability as a leader, was against him. He had knowledge without prudence; and his judgment was subdued by his passions. His pride was extreme; even when his fortune was at the lowest, he scorned to conciliate or attach those whom he considered himself born to command. He was violent and unrelenting, and never tried to conquer by other means than fear: wherever success favoured him, he used his power with a severity which might have strengthened an established ruler, but which could have no effect but creating enemies to one, like him, always struggling against the stream of adversity. Yet his faults, which were numerous, have been forgotten by his countrymen, who speak only of the manly beauty, the elevated courage, and the cruel destiny, of the last prince of the family of Kerreem Khan.

The princes of the Zend dynasty ruled over a great part of Persia for nearly half a century; but, after the death of their founder, their power never possessed any stability. This is, in the first place, to be attributed to their internal divisions, and next, to the genius of their enemy, Aga Mahomed Khan. That monarch, from the hour he fled

all the Zend family, particularly against this prince, he, nevertheless, admired his character. Some time before he took Kerman, he received accounts that his nephew and heir, the present king, had several sons born to him in one night. "May God grant," said Aga Mahomed, "that one of them may resemble Lootf Ali Khan!"—*Persian MS.*

from Shiraz, had laboured incessantly to destroy them: his task was now completed. He owed this triumph more to his foresight and perseverance, than to any brilliant successes of his arms. His present object was to prevent the claims of those whom he had subdued ever being revived: almost every person[t] who could have formed the most remote pretensions from his birth to the throne, was put to death or deprived of sight; and not only the tribe of Zend, but all those who had been the active supporters of the family of Kerreem Khan, were removed from Fars into the most distant quarters of the kingdom. It has been before mentioned, that the native tribes of Persia had been encouraged by that monarch to assert the superiority which had belonged, in former days, to their ancestors. Their efforts had been successful, and they had enjoyed power for a short period; but their use of it had not been such as to lead the more peaceable inhabitants of Persia to regret their downfall. This race of men were brave and warlike; but the habits of long subjection had rendered them even more rude and barbarous than those who rose to fortune upon their ruins.

[t] Abdûllâ Khan, the uncle of Lootf Ali Khan, was, I believe, the only exception. He had married the sister of Hajee Ali Kooli Khan of Kazeroon, and his pardon was granted in consideration of that chief, for whom Aga Mahomed Khan had great regard and respect.

Chapter XVIII.

THE STATE OF PERSIA AND THE NEIGHBOURING NATIONS, AT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POWER OF AGA MAHOMED KHAN, THE FOUNDER OF THE REIGNING FAMILY.

Before we give the history of the family which now occupies the throne of Persia, we must review its condition, and that of the neighbouring states, at the time when Aga Mahomed Khan overcame the last prince of the Zend dynasty. We shall thus better understand the progress which the reigning dynasty have made in establishing their power, and restoring Persia to the rank which it once held among Asiatic nations.

At the death of Lootf Ali Khan, Aga Mahomed Khan was the actual, as well as acknowledged, sovereign of the provinces of Asterabad, Mazenderan, Ghilan, the whole of Irak, Fars, and Kerman. These countries, extending from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, could only be deemed settled and obedient by comparing their condition to Khorassan and other parts of the empire, which had been broken into a number of petty principalities at the death of Nâdir Shah; and had subsequently thrown off their allegiance to those rulers who assumed the title of sovereigns of Persia.

The territories now under Aga Mahomed Khan had enjoyed tranquillity during the latter years of Kerreem Khan, but since his death had become a scene of continual contests. Though the efforts to obtain the crown had been confined to the descendants of that prince, and to their enemy, Aga Mahomed Khan, as each pretender had needed the support of the chiefs of tribes, that class had risen into a consequence much beyond what they had ever before possessed. The events which have been related, shew that the attachment of these chiefs was seldom to be depended upon. It rested on no honorable basis; and defection, from being common,

had almost ceased to be disgraceful. A selfish feeling had taken the place of that loyalty for which the nobles of Persia were once distinguished; and their descendants shewed, even in action, a cautious prudence, which rendered their courage equivocal as their faith. The greatest battles of this period are only trifling skirmishes. When the armies met, a few men (generally belonging to the tribe of the ruler for whom they fought) attacked each other with the ardour of inveterate hostility. The other tribes kept aloof till they saw one or other prevail, when, if they did not betray their leader, they joined in flight or pursuit, according to the issue. In many of these bloodless battles[a], though there were twenty or thirty thousand men on each side, not more than fifteen or twenty were killed, and perhaps double the number wounded. This fact alone accounts for the extraordinary victories which the personal valour of a leader and a few brave adherents often obtained over the most superior numbers.

Though some chiefs of tribes were compelled to place their families at the capital of the ruler they served, as hostages for their fidelity, others, and among them the most powerful, had lodged their wives and children, and the wealth they had accumulated by plunder, in their native towns or villages, which they had fortified on the plea of providing against predatory attacks, but with the real view of rendering themselves in some degree independent of their sovereign.

The condition of the military nobles, or feudal lords, of Persia, was not favorable to Aga Mahomed Khan; but that politic prince had united the efforts of his own tribe, who were all devoted to him. To effect this, he had made what were deemed the greatest sacrifices. He had forgiven, when he had the power to revenge, the blood of his father

[a] I have become acquainted with many of the principal chiefs and leaders who acted in these scenes, and all agree in their account of the warfare in Persia since the death of Nádir Shah.

and uncles, and had pardoned the grossest personal insults to himself when in captivity. His magnanimity was rewarded by the unanimous support of his tribe; and he derived the greatest strength from their fidelity and attachment.

Asterabad had long been the residence of the Kajir chiefs: it was impossible, from its situation in a distant corner of the empire, to make it the capital; but many reasons rendered Aga Mahomed Khan desirous of being near to his hereditary possessions, and to the pastures of those Turkish tribes on whom he was in a great degree dependent for maintaining the crown he had acquired. He determined therefore to fortify Teheran, at the base of that lofty range of mountains which divide Irak from Mazenderan. The fortifications of Isfahan and Shiraz were dismantled. Those of Kerman[1] had also been razed to the ground; and the inhabitants of these cities, harassed with sieges, saw without sorrow the work of demolition; and though some of the military classes might sigh after their lost power, and regret that their harvest of plunder was over, the other inhabitants of the provinces subject to Aga Mahomed Khan were prepared to welcome the establishment of any government promising to afford them effectual and permanent protection.

The ancient province of Carduchia, (the modern Kûrdistan,) which is bounded to the east by the plains of Irak and Aderbejan, to the west by the Tigris, to the north by Armenia, and to the south by the territories of Bagdad, had formerly, as at present, always maintained its own rude go-

[1] This city had formerly been one of the richest and most populous in Persia. When the European factories were established at Gombroon, it became a great emporium of trade between Europe and India, and the countries of Persia, Cabool, and Tartary. The province of which it is the capital, was not productive; but it had some rare articles of commerce, particularly the wool of its goats, which approaches nearer than any other in fineness to that of Cashmere.

vernment[y]; and though its mountain-chiefs had generally acknowledged a paramount lord, they had for ages enjoyed more real independence than those of any other province in this quarter of Asia. Xenophon[z] informs us, that the chiefs of Kûrdistan were disobedient and turbulent vassals to the most powerful Persian monarchs; and there are grounds for believing that the valour of this race emancipated their country from the successors of Alexander. For a short time the legions of Rome occupied a part of Carduchia; but they probably possessed little more than their military positions; and none of the Tartar tribes who have overrun Persia, have ever permanently established themselves in this province[a], which is still inhabited by an original and rude race: though they have departed from the religion, they maintain the usages and habits of their forefathers, and speak a barbarous dialect of the ancient language of Persia.

The causes which have enabled this people to preserve their soil[b] from strangers are obvious. Their country is mountainous and barren; and the few beautiful and fertile valleys interspersed among its clustering hills offer no ade-

[y] A Kûrdish writer, in his preface to a history of his native country, says that authors differ about the origin of the Kûrds. Some believe them to be descended from those persons who were saved from the cruelty of Zohâk. Others trace them to the jin or genii; while many state that the deeves, or demons, connected themselves with women of the earth, and begot the Kûrds.—*Tuarikh Akared*, by SHERRIFF-OOD-DEEN.

[z] The prisoners informed Xenophon, that the Carduchians, who inhabited the mountains along the Tigris, through which he desired to march, "were a warlike nation, and not subject to the king; and that once the king's army, consisting of one hundred and twenty thousand men, penetrated into their country, whence not one of them returned, the roads being hardly passable."—SPELMAN'S *Cyrus*, p. 111.

[a] There are some Arabian tribes in this country; and several of the principal Kûrdish chiefs boast their descent from families of that nation.

[b] The historian of Kûrdistan includes all Lâristan in that country: which, according to him, extends to the Persian Gulf. He says, that Kûrd signifies "valiant;" that Roostem, though born in Seestan, was of a Kûrdish family; and that the common reading of Roostem-e-Goord in Firdousee is erroneous, for it should be Roostem-e-Kûrd, or Roostem the Kûrd.—*Tuarikh Akared*, by SHERRIFF-OOD-DEEN.

quate reward for the effort that would be necessary to reduce it: for its warlike and robust inhabitants are singularly attached to their native land; and their rugged mountains would be as difficult to conquer, as they would be unprofitable to maintain. This race has never been united [c] under one ruler; and perhaps this, which, had they possessed a more inviting country, must soon have led to their subjugation, has been one of the causes enabling them to preserve their independence. Their chiefs constantly at war with each other have always sought the protection of some great power, whose influence or occasional aid enabled them to preserve or increase their territories. They have repaid this support by acknowledging the monarch who granted it as their paramount sovereign; and have discharged the obligation they incurred, sometimes by tribute, sometimes by military service. Their most powerful neighbours preferred the professions of allegiance and the real aid, which they received from the petty rulers of Kûrdistan, to the hazardous attempt to subdue them. The situation of their country, which has generally been the frontier dividing great empires, has been favorable to the policy of its chiefs; and we may conclude that in ancient days they vacillated between the Emperors of Rome and the Sassanian monarchs, as they now do between the kings of Persia and the emperors of Turkey.

The districts of Kûrdistan near the Tigris and vicinity of Bagdad, admit the supremacy of the Turkish government [d];

[c] We are told by Greek historians, that when Artaxerxes Longimanus entered their country with an immense army, he was only saved from destruction by one of his allies fomenting a division between the two great rulers of Carduchia, which led to their consenting to a peace with him. Sherriff-ood-deen, in his history of this nation, relates, that when an envoy from a chief of Kûrdistan came before Mahomed, the prophet was so struck by his fierce looks and gigantic body, as to pray to God that so formidable a race should never be united: hence (the pious author concludes) those divisions, which have ever since distracted them.

[d] The largest half of the Kûrds at present term themselves subjects of the Turkish empire, which they prefer to Persia, as it is less able to enforce the payment of tribute or military service.

while those more to the northward and eastward profess to be under the protection of the king of Persia. Among the latter chiefs, the Waly or Prince of Ardelân[e], is far the most powerful. His territories, bordering on Irak and Aderbejan, are nearly two hundred miles in length, and about a hundred and sixty in breadth. The revenues of this tract are not great; but its princes, who maintain almost regal state, boast their descent from the celebrated Salladin[f]. Their title to this honour is not clearly made out; but the history of their country proves that the government of this province has continued in the same noble family for more than four centuries. The patriarchal character of their rule, and the cheerful obedience of their subjects, are calculated to make the inhabitants of the rich plains of Persia envy the lot of these rugged mountaineers; but, though the kings of Persia have seldom interfered with the internal administration of Ardelân, and have never attempted to set aside the family who govern it, they have often exerted their influence and power to alter the direct line of succession; and, by supporting the pretensions of younger branches, they have created feuds, which have rendered its rulers more dependent upon them.

Khoosroo Khan, who at the death of Lootf Ali Khan was Waly of Ardelân, had professed allegiance to Kerreem Khan; but withdrew all support from his descendants, and became the open enemy of Jaffier Khan, whose nephew Ismael[g] had fled to Sennah and thrown himself on his pro-

[e] Sennah, the capital of Ardelân, lies in latitude 35° 12′ N., and longitude 40° E., sixty miles from Hamadan. It is pleasantly situated in a small valley encircled by mountains. I encamped there for several days in the autumn of 1810, and was entertained in a hospitable and princely manner by the ruling Waly, Amân-ollâ Khan, the son of Khoosroo Khan, who was Waly at the period of which I am writing.

[f] This is the name which European writers give to Sallah-ood-deen, the famous enemy of the crusaders. The family of Ardelân trace their lineage to him through female descent; but in the history of Kûrdistan their title to their possessions rests on an actual occupation for four centuries and a succession of twenty-five male heirs.

[g] In the history of this family which I obtained from the reigning waly,

tection. The defeat of Jaffier Khan near Hamadan was chiefly ascribed to the valour of the troops of Ardelân; and as their chief could not hope after such an event to effect a reconciliation, he attached himself to the cause of Aga Mahomed[h], and sent him all the arms and other trophies which he had taken in this action, as an acknowledgment of his paramount power. From that moment Khoosroo became one of the most powerful supporters of the Kajir monarch, who, when he overcame the Zend dynasty, had a right to expect that the allegiance of the Waly of Ardelân would ensure the submission of all such districts of Kurdistân as had formerly acknowledged the supremacy of the King of Persia.

The family of the princes of Armenia had been extinct for centuries; and that disunited province was hardly entitled to a name, which had long been borne by the country of a brave and independent people. The greatest part had fallen under the Turkish rule; but the north-eastern districts, along the banks of the Araxes[i], and between Aderbejan and Georgia, had in general been subject to Persia: the chiefs of these districts had never been powerful enough to resist the sovereign of that kingdom.

The fine province of Georgia, which is bounded to the north by the Caucasus, to the east by the lofty mountains of Dâghestân and Shirwan, and to the west and south by ancient Armenia, was governed by a waly or prince, who usually acknowledged the sovereign of Persia as his paramount lord. This province boasts a singular salubrity of climate; and is alike famous for the fertility of its soil, the

It is stated that Khoosroo never meant to support Ismael Khan, till the suspicions and intended hostility of Jaffier Khan forced him to it.

[h] Khoosroo Khan, when very young, had been expelled from his territories, and deprived of his birth-right. He owed his restoration to Mahomed Hoossein Khan, the father of Aga Mahomed, and was thus led to entertain a partiality for a family from whose aid he had derived such benefit.

[i] This river is now called the Arras.

luxuriance of its diversified scenes, its rich plains, clear streams, and wooded mountains, and for the courage and beauty of its inhabitants; but for many centuries all these apparent blessings had operated as curses. Its inhabitants, professing the Christian religion, from their situation between two great Mahomedan nations, Turkey and Persia, were subject to a violence and oppression, which had sunk their character to the lowest state. Besides, the internal government was bad. The power of the waly was not only checked by the divisions which his neighbours always fomented in his own family, but by the great authority possessed by his insubordinate nobles, who exercised the most despotic tyranny over their miserable vassals. In a country so situated, the richness of the soil only produced indolence. Men would not labour beyond what was necessary for their subsistence, and that the earth yielded almost spontaneously. The manly form and courage of the male, and the beauty and vivacity of the female youth, made their Mahomedan neighbours always anxious to obtain them as slaves. As they lived in misery at home, and often attained the highest ranks[k] among other nations, even parents did not hesitate to sell their offspring. Nobles made offerings of their vassals; and the walys themselves were often compelled to send, as part of their tribute to the paramount sovereign, some of the fairest of their family and of their subjects[l]. When this

[k] In Turkey it is the usage to promote slaves from Georgia and Circassia to the principal offices of government. This custom has its origin in the policy of despots, who, fearing the natural influence of the chiefs of tribes and men of high families, desire to raise those only whom they can cast down at pleasure.

[l] Joseph Emin, a brave and adventurous Armenian, who tried in vain about this period to excite his countrymen and the Georgians to throw off their degrading subjection, informs us, that Kerreem Khan had sent to Heraclius to demand " that his daughter-in-law (the widow of his eldest son), his heir Goorgeen Khan, his son-in-law the Prince David, twelve noblemen's sons, and twelve beautiful Georgian virgins, (none of whom was to be above twelve years of age,) should be sent to him." They were required as hostages, and as slaves of his pleasure. The messenger threatened an

tribute was withheld, or any other cause gave a pretext for war, the Mahomedan armies rejoiced at an invasion which enabled every soldier to gratify his love of plunder and his brutal lust by the possession of Christian captives: nor had they much to apprehend from opposition, for the princes and nobles were too divided by the collision of their personal interests, to be united even by the approach of a danger which nothing but their union could avert.

There had been no period for many years at which the Georgians appeared more capable of throwing off their yoke, than when Aga Mahomed Khan became the monarch of Persia. The waly Heraclius had attended Nâdir Shah in his campaigns, and had gained the reputation of a good soldier. Favored by the distractions which had prevailed in Persia since the death of that conqueror, he had preserved his native province in tranquillity; but aware that it would be impossible to maintain himself without powerful aid, he sought and obtained the alliance of Russia. The treaty which placed Georgia under the protection of that state will be noticed hereafter: it transferred (as far as the ruling prince had the power of doing so) the allegiance of the walys of Georgia from the sovereigns of Persia to those of Russia.

The kingdom of Persia is bounded to the east by the great province of Khorassan[m], upwards of four hundred miles in length, and near three hundred in breadth. This celebrated region contains many fruitful plains, some lofty and irre-

invasion of the country if the demand was not instantly complied with. The degraded nobles urged their prince to compliance; but he refused; and Kerreem Khan, being forced to march to another quarter, could not execute his threat. The same writer furnishes us with many curious facts relating to the condition of Georgia. He gives no very favourable character of any class of its inhabitants; and he expresses his opinion of the nobles in this very odd but emphatic manner: "They were born twenty-four hours before the devil."

[m] This province has Irak to the west, Candahar and Cabool to the east; it stretches to the north as far as the Oxus, and is bounded to the south by Seestan.

gular ridges of mountains, and several wide tracts of desert. Except in its most fertile districts, it is but partially supplied with water; and from its position, it has perhaps been more exposed to predatory invasions than any other country. Whenever Persia was distracted by internal factions, or had to sustain foreign attack, the tribes of Tartary crossed the Oxus and spread themselves over Khorassan. This was the province which Roostem had to defend against the continual inroads of Afrâsiâb. The Seljookian chiefs invaded it long before their rule extended over the other parts of the empire. It suffered greatly from the ravages of Chenghiz and of Timoor; and, during the reigns of the first Seffavean kings, the Oosbegs, who had conquered Bokhara, made annual attacks upon its fields and cities. Abbas the Great checked these ruinous inroads; and Nâdir made these plundering Tartars tremble for their own possessions. But the death of that conqueror left his native province more exposed than ever; for, while his descendants, stript of the vast inheritance which he had bequeathed them, exercised a mock sovereignty over the city of Meshed, several military chiefs seized on the different forts of Khorassan, and establishing a number of small principalities, exercised an almost regal sway, making war or peace with their petty neighbours as suited their interest; and sometimes defying, and at others paying homage and tribute to the more powerful monarchs by whom they were surrounded.

Khorassan is peopled by many races: its warlike inhabitants boast their descent from Arabian, Kûrd, Turkish[a], and Affghan tribes, who came at different periods to subdue or to defend it: but neither their having so long inhabited the same soil, nor a sense of common danger, has softened those inveterate prejudices, or abated that rooted hatred, with which these races regard each other; and it had been the

[a] The word Turkish is always used to describe the inhabitants of Tûrkistan or Tartary, or those who derive their origin from that country, and continue to speak its language.

policy of the Persian monarchs to increase divisions, enabling them to keep in subjection a country, the inhabitants of which, if united, would have been dangerous; for the men of Khorassan, from the robustness of their frame, and from being continually inured to war, are proverbially brave; and Nâdir Shah, with the vanity of a native, but not without truth, used to call this fine province "the sword of Persia."

Meshed, the capital of Khorassan, had been for some years the residence of Nâdir's court; and it was all that his successors saved from the wreck of his dominions. It has been already mentioned [o], that the generous gratitude of Ahmed Shah, the monarch of the Affghans, had assigned it, and the districts in its immediate vicinity, to the unfortunate Shah Rokh, the grandson and heir of Nâdir. From this period, Meshed became a scene of distraction, owing principally to the incompetence of its unfortunate ruler, and to the disputes of Nâser-ollâ Meerza and Nâdir Meerza, his unworthy sons, who, with alternate success, combated for the sole possession of their father's power. The chief ornament and support of Meshed is the tomb of the Imâm Rezâ, to which many thousands of pious pilgrims annually resort, and which had been enriched by the bounty of sovereigns. But the sanctity of this mausoleum did not save it from the sacrilegious sons of Shah Rokh; they plundered its treasury, and despoiled the monument of its most massy [p] and valuable ornaments, which they converted into coin to pay their clamorous soldiers. Nâser-ollâ Meerza, who had been compelled to fly, sought the aid of Kerreem Khan; but that prudent prince having declined giving him support, he returned to Khorassan, where he soon afterwards died. This

[o] Vol. ii. page 57.

[p] Nâser-ollâ Meerza carried away the golden railing round the tomb, and Nâdir Meerza took down the great golden ball from the top of the dome over the grave, which was said to weigh sixty maunds, or four hundred and twenty pounds. The carpets fringed with gold, the golden lamps, and every thing valuable, were plundered by these necessitous and rapacious princes.—*Persian MS.*

event left Nâdir Meerza without a competitor within the walls of the city; but he was attacked by the chief of a neighbouring district[q], who took Meshed, and held it for five years: after this, Shah Rokh was restored to nominal authority by the arms of Timoor Shah, King of the Affghans, and son to the monarch who first allotted this city for the support of the family of Nâdir Shah.

The inhabitants of Meshed were reduced at this period to less than twenty thousand[r]; and its revenues had suffered a still greater decrease; for the Oosbegs made constant inroads, plundered the fields close to its walls, and often led those who ventured to till them, into captivity. To complete the wretchedness of Nâdir's degraded descendant, he was obliged to give a great portion of the small revenue he received, to purchase of neighbouring chiefs an exemption from that attack which his weakness invited.

Shah Rokh still possessed many of the jewels which Nâdir had brought from India; and we are told[s], that this had already excited the cupidity of Aga Mahomed Khan, who looked to the termination of his contest with the Zend dynasty with increased impatience, when he heard of any war in Khorassan that exposed those rich ornaments to hazard. He considered them to belong to the crown of Persia; and he thought, till he was at liberty to reclaim them, they could not be in better custody than with the weak ruler of Meshed.

The town and district of Nishapore, situated about sixty miles to the south-west of Meshed, had been seized, on the death of Nâdir Shah, by Abbas Kooli Khan, a chief of the Turkish tribe of Byât[t]. His usurpation was supported by

[q] Mâmeish Khan of Chinnarân.

[r] We are told, that Meshed at this period had not more than three thousand inhabited dwellings. In the time of Nâdir Shah it had sixty thousand; but it was then the residence of a great court.—*Persian MS.*

[s] Persian MS.

[t] The powerful tribe of Byât came originally from Tartary with Chenghis Khan. They were long settled in Asia Minor; and a number of them

ten thousand families of his tribe, settled near that city; and he remained in undisturbed possession until attacked by Ahmed Shah Abdâllee, who took Nishapore, and carried its lord a prisoner to Cabool; but the good qualities and good fortune of Abbas Kooli rendered this misfortune the means of his advancement. He became a favorite of his conqueror, who married his sister; and the daughter of the Affghan monarch was bestowed on the eldest son of his captive.

The chief of the Byâts, strong in the friendship and alliance of the royal house of Abdâllee, returned to Nishapore, and devoted the remainder of his life to improving that town, and the districts dependent upon it; but, though there is reason to believe that he was a moderate and just ruler[u], we must smile when we are told by his flatterers, that Nishapore under him approached its ancient splendour[x]. That town, now become a fastness for a petty Turkish chief, whose subjects lived amid its ruins, once vied with the proudest cities in Persia. It is said to have been founded by Tahamurs, and destroyed by Alexander. We know that Shahpoor the First rebuilt it, and gave it the name[y] it now bears; and his statue was overturned and broken by

fought in the army of Bajazet against Timoor. After his defeat, many families of this tribe were sent by the conqueror to Diarbekir; but, having quarrelled with the ruler of that province, they went to the territories of Bagdad, and lived there till the time of Shah Tâmâsp, who brought them into Persia. One half was settled at Souj-Bulâgh, a district of Teheran; the remainder at Ashrâff, in Mazenderan. They remained on these lands till Abbas the Second transplanted a number of them to Khorassan. The Byâts are still more numerous in Turkey than in Persia; but in the latter country they were registered in the reign of the Seffavean monarchs at forty thousand families.—*Persian MS.*

[u] Abbas Kooli Khan has the character of a mild and humane man; nevertheless he obtained power over the branch of Byâts by murdering his relation, Ahmed Khan, who was their legitimate chief.

[x] Persian MS.

[y] The name is a compound of *Ni*, reed, and Shahpoor. The prefix *Ni*, denoting the produce of the plain it stands in, distinguishes it from the city of Shahpoor in Fars, which was also founded by Shahpoor the First.

the Arabs, when they first took and plundered this royal city[z]. It had afterwards been inhabited by Sultan Mahmood of Ghizni, when he was ruler of Khorassan, and was restored to considerable splendour by the first princes of the Seljookian dynasty: but it had subsequently been twice completely destroyed by the hordes of Tartary, whose progress it had been fortified to oppose. Nothing could have enabled this city to regain the degree of prosperity it had again attained, except its fine soil and delightful climate[a]: but, after all, we only discover the shadow of its former greatness; for those limits, which could formerly boast a population of more than two hundred thousand persons, were inhabited by less than a twentieth part of that number; and many of the fields around, that were now waste, were intersected by the dry channels of innumerable canals, shewing what labour had once contributed to their verdure and fertility.

At the death of Abbas Kooli, his eldest son[b] appears to have been set aside as incompetent; and the second son, Ali Kooli, seized on the government. His claims, however, were disputed by the next brother, Jaffier Khan, who, after a short struggle, prevailed, and deprived him of his eyesight. The other acts of this chief were all of the same nature; and we may conclude that his subjects looked forward with satisfaction to that change in their condition, which the recent success of Aga Mahomed Khan must have led them to expect.

Among the most powerful chiefs of Khorassan, was Meer Hoossein Khan of Tubbus, who offered an asylum and aid

[z] Kinnier's Persia, p. 186.

[a] The fruits of Nishapore are uncommonly fine, particularly the melons; its mountains are cultivated to the very summit. The Ferouzah, or "Turquoise stone," is found in them.—*Persian MS.*

[b] He had eight sons. The manuscript I write from states that the eldest, Mahomed Hoossein Khan, had no talents for rule. It then proceeds to describe the contests between the two next; the other five are never noticed.

to the unfortunate Lootf Ali Khan. The possessions of this chief, situated in the southern part of the province, were so surrounded with deserts, as to be almost inaccessible to a numerous army. Meer Hoossein Khan was the chief of the Arabian tribe Ben-Shaibân, which had been settled at Rhé when Persia was under the Caliphs of Bagdad, and was transplanted to the soil they now inhabited by one of the Seffavean kings. Favored by situation, by the valour and attachment of their tribe, and by the unsettled condition of the empire, the chiefs of this race had for centuries maintained themselves in the possession they now enjoyed; and their rule at different periods had extended over several other districts of Khorassan. They had usually acknowledged the King of Persia as their paramount sovereign; and, when the empire was in a settled state, had neither withheld their tribute nor a quota of their troops; and the most powerful monarchs of Persia had preferred the benefit derived from this qualified submission, to the hazard of an effort to subdue them.

The immediate predecessors[c] of the ruler of Tubbus had

[c] Ali Murdân Khan, the father of the present chief, had not hesitated, with an army of six or seven thousand men, to advance to Goonâhâbâd, the frontier of his possessions, and engage an Affghan force nearly treble his numbers, which Ahmed Shah had sent to attack him. He completely defeated them; and was equally successful in an action against still superior numbers sent by the same sovereign to revenge his disgrace. But the gallant chief continued his pursuit of the latter force with an imprudent ardour; he fell into an ambush and was slain, after a desperate resistance; not one of the party who accompanied him fled or surrendered: they all fell near the body of their chief. But the enemy were ignorant of the importance of their victory, till a dying soldier, whom they were stripping, exclaimed, "Why do you waste your time on me, when the body of the noble Ali Murdân Khan lies near that well?" They hastened to inform the Affghan general of this, who collected his fugitive army; and the troops of Tubbus, dispirited by the loss of their chief, fled before those whom they had so lately conquered. Meer Mahomed Khan, the eldest son of the deceased chief, succeeded him; and, after Ahmed Shah left Khorassan, formed the project not only of subduing that province, but of carrying his arms into the territories of the Affghans. He took Meshed, and several other towns in Khorassan. But his ambition was checked by divisions in his own family;

been remarkable for their courage and enterprise. He was himself deemed a sensible and moderate man, who, solely intent upon preserving his family possessions, cherished no schemes of attacking those of others. His territories were about a hundred and fifty miles in length, and nearly as much in breadth; but a great part of them was barren waste. The town of Tubbus, which was rudely fortified, owed its principal strength to being surrounded for more than thirty miles in every direction by a desert. Meer Hoossein Khan maintained an army of two thousand horse and six thousand foot; and his followers were surpassed by none in valour or attachment to their chief. The whole population of the country is not estimated at above thirty thousand families; but many of these are affluent, and almost all of them possess property[d]. From the chief to his lowest subjects, they traffic in sheep and camels, but mostly in the latter, which they breed in their arid plains in great numbers. These they either sell or let; and the chief of Tubbus has generally more than a thousand camels hired out to the merchants of his own country, or to others who dwell in its vicinity.

The Arab tribe cf Ben-Shaibân have now dwelt in this country for nearly two centuries, under the family of their present chief. The author of a Memoir on the actual state of Khorassan observes, "that they have never been expelled from their homes, (even for a day,) nor do they live in fear of any such calamity[e]." The means of their rulers, though limited for the purposes of ambition, are ample for those of defence; and the inhabitants of Tubbus and its dependent districts[f], may hear, without a sigh, the travellers over their

and, after he had settled them, his life terminated like that of his father. He had defeated the troops of a neighbouring chief, Ali Yâr Khan, of Subzâwar. When pursuing his enemies, his horse fell, and he was killed on the spot. He was succeeded by his brother, Meer Hoossein Khan.

[d] This country is celebrated for producing the best tobacco in Persia.

[e] Persian MS.

[f] The principal of these is Toon, which lies at the distance of about sixty miles: it is defended by a very strong ark, or citadel.

barren mountains and sandy deserts, tell of those fruitful fields and delightful streams, which are at one moment the abode of plenty and enjoyment, and at another, a scene of rapine and desolation.

The town and district of Kayn, to the south-east of Tubbus, were under an Arabian family[g] of high rank, whose ancestor, Meer Ismael Khan, received a grant of it, to maintain his tribe, from the last Seffavean monarch. This chief served with distinction in the army of Nâdir Shah: his grandson now inherited this sterile possession[h]. Numbers of camels are reared in the plains of Kayn, and its mountains are covered with sheep; from the wool, carpets of different textures are made, of a quality equal to any produced in Persia. The rulers of this province usually pay their tribute in this manufacture[i]; but the military service of their followers has always been an object more desired by their paramount lord than the revenue of their lands; for the Arabs[k] of Kayn have long enjoyed the reputation of being the hardiest and bravest infantry of Khorassan. Their present chief[l] had aided Lootf Ali Khan; but the nature and situation of his country left him little to fear from Aga Mahomed, whose wisdom, he knew, would at all times prefer his proffered allegiance, to the hazard

[g] They were Syuds, of the tribe of Khâzinâh.

[h] A part of the district of Kayn borders on the Desert of Seestan, while it is bounded in another quarter by the territories of the Affghans. The Desert of Seestan, which borders on Kayn, is called by the Mahomedan author whom I follow, "the Desert of Lot." He asserts, in the same passage, "that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which God destroyed, and heaped the ruins upon the heads of their guilty inhabitants, were situated in this part of Persia."

[i] The revenue of Kayn was estimated under the Seffavean princes at twelve thousand tomâns in specie, and as many khârwârs, or ass loads of grain. The tomân is about forty shillings, and the ass load one hundred maunds Tebreez, or seven hundred pounds weight.

[k] They are computed at about twenty thousand families. The usual force which their chief maintains, is between two and three thousand infantry, and a few horse.

[l] Meer Ali Khan.

his troops must be exposed to in an unprofitable expedition amid barren deserts and rugged mountains.

The district of Tursheez, immediately north of Tubbus, is in possession of another tribe of Arabs[m]. Their chief[n], who had been governor both of Kermanshah and Herat, was forced, after the death of Nâdir Shah, to leave Irak with his tribe. He was invited by his brother[o] to settle at Tursheez, of which the latter had made himself master. Like other rulers of similar condition, the chiefs of this place were often engaged in petty wars with their neighbours, and in internal disputes[p]; but the authority of Moostâphâ Kooli Khan[q] was at this period acknowledged by the whole tribe. The district of Tursheez is very productive[r]. It abounds in grain, and in fruits[s] of all descriptions; but the Oosbegs, for several years past, had annually laid waste its fields and plundered its villages.

About thirty miles to the north-east of Tursheez, a chief, called Isaak Khan, had established an influence and power, perhaps inferior to that of no petty ruler of Khorassan, and rendered more remarkable from having been entirely created by his personal exertions. Amid the sameness of scenes of usurpation, the attention is forcibly arrested by a man who had overcome every prejudice and every obstacle that could prevent his aspiring to or attaining authority. Isaak Khan had not even the rank which belongs to the lowest individual

[m] They are called Meishmust, or "the wanton sheep;" a name they are said to have derived from having entered into a war about a sheep. They belonged, before that event, to the tribe of Jûmâllee.

[n] The name of this chief was Abd-ool Ali. He was a soldier of reputation, much esteemed by Nâdir.

[o] Khulleel Khan.

[p] MS. History of the Chiefs of Khorassan.

[q] The son of Abd-ool Ali Khan.

[r] Its revenue is estimated at thirty thousand tomâns Khorassanee (about sixty thousand pounds) a year. This is the nett produce to the ruler, besides all payment of collection, and the lands made over for the maintenance of his tribe.

[s] The grapes, figs, and pomegranates of Tursheez are deemed equal, if not superior, to any in Persia.

of a military tribe. He was born a Taujeck[t], and, according to prejudice, was by birth unwarlike; but his father, who was servant to a chief of the branch of the tribe of Kârâ Tâtâr[u], had shown himself above the duties of a shepherd, which was his first employ, and had latterly been trusted with the command of a hundred men. The young Isaak, who derived claims from the character of his father, was appointed one of the mace-bearers to his chief, whom he persuaded to depute him to Turbut-e-Hyderee, (then an inconsiderable place,) to rebuild a caravansary for the use of travellers. Having obtained a considerable sum of money for this purpose, he commenced his task. But his plans, which had been long laid, now approached to maturity. He gradually converted the caravansary into a square fort; and his intrigues to foment divisions in the tribe he was attached to were so successful, that by the time his work was completed, his chief was slain by some of his own officers, and his sons were compelled to fly the country, to save themselves from a similar fate.

These events produced feuds in the tribe of Kârâ Tâtâr, which added to the power of Isaak Khan; all the discontented found refuge with him; and, strengthened by these adherents, and by that wisdom which enabled him to turn every occurrence amid the revolutions around him to advantage, the shepherd's son soon became one of the most powerful nobles in Khorassan. In the early part of his career he had been greatly aided by the monarch of the Affghans, whose army he had joined, and whose court he had visited; but when his power increased, he threw off his allegiance;

[t] The word Taujeck has been before explained. It is always applied to unwarlike peasants and citizens.

[u] The black Tâtârs, or, as Europeans term them, Tartars. This tribe had come from Tartary with Timoor. He had settled part of them in Turkey, and part in Khorassan. After his death they had dispersed. Nâdir Shah had desired to reassemble them, and seven or eight thousand families had been brought together under Nujuff Ali Khan, the chief in whose service Isaak Khan and his father were employed.

and the troubled state of Cabool left him without apprehension from that quarter.

A writer, who was in Khorassan the year before it was invaded by Aga Mahomed Khan, states, "that the possessions of Isaak Khan extend on the north to the gates of Meshed, a distance of more than a hundred miles; and almost as far south in the direction of Khâf [x]. His revenue is very considerable; and he maintains a force of six thousand men; but he trusts more to policy than to arms for his future security. This extraordinary man has hitherto never failed in conciliating, when necessary, the good opinion and confidence of his superiors. He is dreaded and hated by those who deem themselves his equals; who have seen with envy and astonishment the success of all his measures: but no ruler was ever more beloved by his subjects; and none ever more merited to be so, for to them he devotes himself. He manages all his own affairs. In the most remote districts, there are no great renters, or deputies, who have the power to oppress his people. His mind is incessantly occupied, and he was never known to spend an idle moment. No one is intrusted with the secrets of this inscrutable man; but experience has led all to repose with confidence in his wisdom. He is the first merchant in his country; and derives from this source half as much revenue [y] as he takes from his subjects. The integrity and regularity of his dealing is so remarkable, that his bills are current not only in Khorassan, but all over Cabool and Persia. This chief reads a great deal, and is esteemed a good Arabian and Persian scholar. He is thoroughly versed in the history of his

[x] The direct line is rather south-east.

[y] His whole revenue is computed at a hundred thousand tomâns (two hundred thousand pounds); thirty thousand are stated to be from his own estates, almost all of which he has purchased; forty thousand from his subjects; and twenty thousand, profits of his merchandise. He is said to have three thousand camels continually on hire with the caravans between India and Persia. He exports all the dried fruits and other produce of his own estates, and imports the produce of other countries, which he sells.

country, and of neighbouring nations; and he appears careful to give his sons the best possible education, particularly those by the daughter of the chief of the Kârâ Tâtârs, whom he married soon after her father's death. His politic preference of this part of his family, and his declaration that the eldest son of this high-born lady shall be his heir, has reconciled many of her tribe to his authority [z]."

The greatest relaxation which Isaak Khan permitted himself, was perhaps of a nature more calculated to give stability to his power, as it advanced his reputation, than all his labours. Turbut-e-Hyderee, which he had raised from an inconsiderable village into a town of consequence, was a place of great resort to pilgrims, merchants, and travellers. The Persians boast, not without some reason, that they excell all other nations in hospitality. It is natural therefore, that they should dwell with exultation on this part of the character of Isaak Khan: his Mehmân Khânâh, or hall of entertainment, which could contain nearly five hundred guests, was always open; and from it none, however low, or of whatever persuasion, were excluded. The author before quoted says, "his hospitality and charity are so boundless, that even the Hindus [a] who apply here are supplied with money, that they may purchase and eat apart that meal which their religion forbids their enjoying in the society of others." Isaak Khan is represented [b] as delighting in this part of his establishment. He always dines with his guests; and his attentions are so divided that, in the words of the Persian author [c], "princes and beggars are equally pleased." It is in these hours of relaxation that he displays his great knowledge of men and books, and adds to his vast stock of

[z] MS. History of the chiefs of Khorassan.

[a] A number of Hindus are settled in Khorassan, and many pass through it on their way to other parts of Persia.

[b] Meerza Ali Nuckee, a very sensible Persian, who had travelled a great deal, and was several weeks at Turbut-e-Hyderee, was still more enthusiastic in praising the extraordinary talents and the hospitality of Isaak Khan.

[c] MS. History of the Chiefs of Khorassan.

knowledge. We cannot be surprised that those who for days, weeks, and months have listened to his conversation and partaken of his hospitality, should spread his name in every direction. This reputation was of itself a safeguard; for the most absolute sovereigns of Asia are the slaves of public opinion; and the monarch who, without an adequate pretext, should diminish means so justly accumulated and so nobly used, would be exposed to reproach from all who had either enjoyed or heard of the bounty of this extraordinary man. This account of Isaak Khan is taken from one who knew and admired him; but it is confirmed by more impartial observers; and, though it may be highly coloured, there can be no doubt that it is substantially true.

The town and district of Subzâwâr[d], which lies between Turbut-e-Hyderee and Irak, has, since the death of Nâdir Shah, been in the possession of Ali Yâr Khan, the chief of a Turkish tribe[e], who has endeavoured, by fortifying some strong holds, to render himself independent; but he possesses little power, and has often been in danger from the attacks of the petty rulers in his vicinity. To the north of Meshed, along the more mountainous part of Khorassan, (which borders on the country of the Turkumans, who now inhabit the ancient kingdom of Khaurizm,) two Kurdish chiefs, high in the favour and employ of Nâdir and his successors, established their tribe. These chiefs were both dead, but their sons had inherited their possessions. Ameer Goonâh Khan[f] was the ruler of Kâbooshân, and Mâmeish Khan of Chinnarân. Nothing in the history of these two nobles merits notice. They had fortified the towns they resided in sufficiently to resist an army unprovided with artillery; but their fields were continually exposed to the

[d] The revenue of this province has been estimated at twelve thousand tomâns (twenty-four thousand pounds), twenty-four thousand khârwârs of grain, one thousand of cotton, and three hundred of silk.

[e] The name of the tribe is Ghilichi. They are a branch of the tribe of Tochtamish, the first of the tribes of Kapchack.

[f] The name of his tribe is Zufferânloo.

inroads of the Turkuman tribes in one quarter, and to the ruler of the Oosbegs in the other. The former they were able to oppose: but they were compelled to purchase an exemption from the violence of the latter, by a present, or rather tribute, repeated every time that he made or threatened an incursion into their territories. Though the tract of country under their authority was not large, it was very productive. Some part of their revenue, particularly of Mâmeish Khan, was derived from his superior stud of horses: these were descended from the fine Arabians brought by Nâdir Shah to this quarter; and the progeny, from being crossed with the stronger breeds of the country, and nourished with rich pasture, attained to considerable size and strength as well as beauty; and so great was their value, that the monarchs, whose paramount power he was compelled to acknowledge, always made it a condition, that part of his tribute should be some of his highest bred colts.

To the east of the possessions of these chiefs stands the once celebrated city of Merv, the capital of the ancient Margiana. This city was founded by Alexander the Great, and became the residence of one of his successors, Antiochus Nicator, who called it Antiocha. In more modern days it was deemed one of the four royal cities[g] of Khorassan, and was often the residence of powerful monarchs. When the Seffavean kings fixed their capital at Isfahan, Merv, which became the frontier city in the most exposed quarter of the empire, was always committed to a military leader of the highest rank. In the reign of Tâmâsp the First, a branch[h] of the Kajir tribe had been sent to Merv; and their chiefs had, with some vicissitudes of fortune, ever since remained its governors. After the death of Nâdir Shah, Byram Ali Khan maintained it for a long period against the annual attacks of the Oosbegs: but the contest was unequal; and

[g] Meshed, or Toos, Nishapore, Herat, and Merv.

[h] The name of this branch is Azdânloo.

the gallant chief, after a noble struggle[l], was defeated and slain in an action near the Oxus. His son, Mahomed Hoossein Khan, every way worthy of his father, maintained for a short period the walls of the city of Merv, which were his only inheritance; for the Oosbegs had rendered the country round it a barren waste. Though denied aid by the chiefs of Khorassan, and very inefficiently supported by the Affghan monarch, Timoor Shah, he continued, while a ray of hope remained, to strive against adversity; but the inhabitants of Merv, who began to experience all the miseries of famine, at last compelled him to surrender[k].

The court of Constantinople was at this period too deeply involved in the result of those changes which distracted Europe, to take any concern in the affairs of Persia. It left the management of these to the rulers of its eastern provinces, the principal of whom was Sulimân Aga, for many years Pâchâ of Bagdad. This chief has been already mentioned as the brave defender of Bussorah, when it was attacked by the troops of Kerreem Khan. He had subsequently attained his present high station, and had used every means to strengthen himself, that he might escape the usual fate of Turkish governors. He had been completely successful, and was considered firmly established in his

[l] In the Life of Byram Ali Khan, which is given at some length in a Persian manuscript in my possession, he is said, by his valour and conduct, to have gained frequent and great advantages over the Oosbegs.

[k] Mahomed Hoossein Khan was carried a prisoner to Bokhara; and for some time after his arrival was treated with honour and distinction; but he soon became an object of jealousy to his conqueror, and was obliged to save his life by sudden flight. After wandering for several years as an exile, and suffering all the vicissitudes of fortune, he reached the court of Persia, where he was received in the warmest manner; and he at this moment enjoys the friendship of the king, who honours him with peculiar regard. But even royal favours cannot banish from the memory of this able and respectable nobleman the traces of his misfortunes; for he has not only been deprived of his inheritance, but has survived the destruction of his tribe and the death of all his family, most of whom were sacrificed to appease the tyrannical bigot from whose power he had fled.

pachalik. His mild virtues[l] had contributed as much as his wisdom and courage to the fulfilment of this object. He was beloved by the inhabitants of Bagdad and of the cities under his immediate rule. The tributaries of his government, the Arab tribes[m] who feed their flocks on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates between his capital and Bussorah, and the different chiefs of Kûrdistan who acknowledged themselves subjects of the Turkish government, viewed Sulimân Pâchâ with respect, and granted him a willing obedience: while the court of Constantinople, after discovering that his authority was too strongly established to be easily subverted, declared itself satisfied with his rule. His moderation and good sense led him to preserve the most amicable relations with all his neighbours; and since the death of Kerreem Khan no circumstance had disturbed the good understanding between Persia and Turkey.

The rise of Ahmed Shah Abdâllee to the sovereignty of Cabool and Candahar has been before noticed. That prince had greatly added to the wealth and fame of his own family and of his kingdom, by six invasions of India, in all of which he was successful; and in one he obtained the highest renown among Mahomedans, by the memorable defeat[n] of

[l] I visited the court of Sulimân Pâchâ in A.D. 1800, and was struck by the simplicity and manliness of his character. This chief, like most of those who enjoy a high station in the Turkish territories, had been a slave; but no unpleasant feelings seemed associated with the recollection of his former condition. After he had introduced me to some of his chief officers, he called up a person, and said, "This, Captain Malcolm, is the son of my first master. He treated me with the greatest kindness. I try to repay the obligation by considering his son as my own child!"

[m] The rule of the Turkish government over these tribes is very lenient; and they have been rescued, by submission to it, from a condition of continual war with each other. They are sensible of this benefit: I heard a chief of one of them say, "That if there was no Pâchâ of Bagdad, he would put a Turk's cap upon a stick, and not only offer it allegiance, but recommend all the tribes in his neighbourhood to do the same."

[n] This famous action was fought in January A.D. 1761. It was a contest between the Mahomedans and Hindus for the sovereignty of India. The Mahomedan army amounted to sixty thousand men, of whom not half were Affghans; but his own troops were those on which Ahmed Shah

the Marhatta army on the plains of Paniput, a few miles to the north of Delhi. This victory was the first effectual check to the power of that great Hindu nation, whose conquests a few months before extended from the southernmost regions of India to the Indus.

Ahmed Shah, as has been already mentioned [o], subdued the greater part of Khorassan; and he was acknowledged as their paramount sovereign by almost all the chiefs of that quarter. He was continually occupied in foreign wars: in fact, he had no other means of supporting his army, or preserving the obedience of his turbulent vassals. He received but a small revenue from his extensive territories; for the countries of Cabool and Candahar had almost all been made over to different tribes, who, in return for their lands, gave their military service: and Ahmed was too able and considerate, to hazard his power by attempting to subdue his rude subjects into a submission incompatible with their usages. He was grateful for their attachment, and patient of their disobedience; and endeavoured by every means to improve the advantage he derived from belonging to the venerated family of Sedoozehi [p]. By accommodating his rule to the character and prejudices of his subjects, he became a powerful monarch. But his authority had never any other foundation than his popularity with the warlike tribes; and as these were devoted to their respective chiefs, and distracted by internal feuds, we can hardly conceive a more uncertain and dangerous inheritance than that which he bequeathed at his death [q] to his son, Timoor Shah [r]. This prince, more intent on enjoying than increasing his power, seemed only desirous of repose. He removed the

most depended. The Marhattas were computed between seventy and eighty thousand. They were defeated with great slaughter.

[o] Vide vol. ii. p. 56.

[p] See the description of this tribe, vol. i. p. 403.

[q] He died in June 1773. He was only fifty of years age.

[r] Timoor had to overcome some opposition before he obtained the crown, the vizier of Ahmed Shah having, when that sovereign died, attempted to raise his younger brother to the throne.

seat of government from Candahar to Cabool, because he preferred the peaceable disposition of the latter city to the turbulence of the former. He maintained hardly any troops except a body of guards, formed chiefly of men not belonging to Affghan tribes; and far from attempting foreign conquests, he allowed the great feudatories of the empire to withhold their tribute, and some even to throw off their allegiance, without an effort to subdue them. Notwithstanding his weakness and inaction, Timoor Shah, aided by the impression of his father's character[s], occupied the throne for twenty years. But the repose which had marked his reign terminated with his life; and his son, Zemaun Shah, was assailed by the open or secret attacks of all his brothers, who found ready adherents among martial tribes, hating that tranquillity which condemned them to inaction.

Several of the southern provinces in the Affghan kingdom had thrown off their dependence on the monarchs of Cabool. The government of Scind had been usurped by a race of chiefs[t] whose ancestors were converted from the Hindu faith; and that fine province was now ruled by three brothers of this family, who had established an authority even more rude and barbarous than what they had subverted. Seestan, Balochistan, and Mekran, since the death of Ahmed Shah, had granted no more than a nominal obedience. The chief of a principal tribe in the former province, though he only enjoys a revenue of a few thousand rupees[u], and his whole force hardly amounts to five hundred men, styles himself the descendant from the ancient kings of Persia, and adds to his name the proud title of Kaianee. This plunderer, for such he is, inhabits a small town called Julla-

[s] One author states, that he was greatly indebted to his full treasury for the tranquillity his territories enjoyed. This may have had that effect, as it placed him above the necessity of acts of violence and oppression.

[t] Scind may be described as a delta where the mouths of the Indus fall into the ocean; bounded by the sea to the south, and by deserts that divide it from the provinces of India to the east, it is separated to the north and west by lofty ranges of mountains from Balochistan and Affghanistan.

[u] Captain Christie's Journal.

labad, situated amid the vast ruins of the ancient city of Seestan, or Dooshak; and among those that obey him are the tribe of Noosheerwan, who feed their flocks in the Vale of Soohrab. We cannot but smile when the former glory of Persia is thus brought before our thoughts: but the existence of these ancient names among this rude and unaltered people, and the immense ruins found in every part of this deserted but once flourishing province, afford strong evidence that there is a foundation in truth for what has ever been deemed the most fabulous part in the ancient history of Persia[1].

Balochistan and great part of Mekran were at this period under the rule of Nâser Khan, whose ancestors had enjoyed considerable power over these barren countries for nearly two centuries. The conciliating policy of Ahmed Shah had induced this chief to become his vassal: but a regular treaty was drawn up between the sovereign and his powerful dependant; and it was stipulated, that neither Nâser Khan nor his successors should ever be called upon to interfere or aid in settling any internal disputes among the Affghans. Since the death of Ahmed, that chief had withdrawn himself from the court of Cabool, and his territories could not therefore be deemed subject to it. The kings of Cabool still retained a part of Khorassan: their principal possession in that province was the city of Herat, which had been committed to the care of a son of the reigning monarch, Zemaun Shah.

This chapter would be incomplete without reviewing the condition of the part of Tartary between Khorassan and the Jaxartes. Its inhabitants had from the earliest ages made constant inroads on the frontier provinces of Persia; and they several times overran and subjugated the whole kingdom. Four centuries since, the sword of Timoor had laid waste its fields and destroyed its cities: but the traces of desolation still remained, to remind the inhabitants of what

[1] The History of Roostem and his Family. See vol. i. chap. ii. and iii.

their ancestors had suffered; and they watched with anxious alarm every appearance like the gathering of clouds in that quarter, whence those storms had overwhelmed their country in ruin.

The provinces immediately north of Khorassan, between the Oxus and the Caspian, which formed part of the kingdom of Khaurizm, are possessed by a number of tribes, tracing their descent from some men of a Moghul family [y], who are represented to have emigrated at a very early period from the northern parts of Tartary to the provinces they now inhabit. According to this account, they married the women of the country where they settled; and though their descendants were not deemed worthy of being ranked in the tribe of their fathers, they were a robust and warlike race, and were denominated Turkuman [z], which signifies "like or resembling Turks."

In former parts of this History, we have made frequent mention of these tribes. They had enjoyed large possessions in Asia Minor, on the plains of which many of them still dwell. Their chiefs at one time attained sovereign power in Persia; and two families [a] of Turkuman princes are among the dynasties who have possessed that empire. The tribes which now occupied the pasture lands on the east of the Caspian, were too disunited to attempt conquest or pretend to power: but they were too bold and restless to remain at peace; and, during the whole period between the death of Nadâr Shah and the establishment of Aga Mahomed Khan, they had made almost annual predatory inroads into Persia: nor were their enterprises confined to the provinces in their vicinity; they even extended into

[y] D'Herbelot, on the authority of Mirkhond, states that they were of the tribe of Oghooz Khan, who was the third prince of the Moghul dynasty, being the grandson of Moghul Khan, its founder.

[z] Turkuman is an abbreviated form of Turk-manund: the latter word signifies "resembling." This etymology is so simple and probable, that we can hardly doubt its correctness.

[a] The families of the white and black sheep.—See vol. i. p. 316.

Irak. Parties of twenty or thirty Turkuman horse often ventured within sight of Isfahan. They expected success in these excursions from the suddenness of their attack, and from the uncommon activity and strength of their horses. Their sole object was plunder. When they arrived at an unprotected village, the youth of both sexes were seized, and tied on led horses, (which the Turkumans took with them for carrying their booty,) and hurried away into distant captivity, with a speed[b] which generally baffled all pursuit.

Although the hostility of these barbarians was a serious evil to the districts which they visited, they had no collective strength that could render them formidable as an enemy to Persia; but the condition of the tribes which dwelt beyond the Oxus, as far as the Lake of Arral in one direction, and the Jaxartes in another, was very different. These had been subdued by the arts or the power of a prince called Beggee Jân, who, clothed in the humble garment of a mendicant, and deriving aid at one moment from superstition, and at another from his sword, had established his authority over the kingdom of Maver-ool-Naher, or Transoxania.

A great tribe, or rather horde, who dwell on the plains of Kapchack, adopted the name of their ruler, Oosbeg Khan, a prince of the race of Chenghiz. The appellation of Oosbeg afterwards became that of a considerable nation, which boasted some of the most warlike tribes of Tartary. The defeat of this race by Timoor has been already related, as well as their subsequent success against his descendant, the celebrated Baber[c]. The Oosbeg chief who overcame that

[b] The Turkuman horse is a fine animal between fifteen and sixteen hands high. He is bred from the Arabian; but the cross with the breed of the country, and the fine pasture, have given him great size and strength. Probably no horses in the world can endure so much fatigue. I ascertained after minute examination, that those small parties of Turkumans who ventured several hundred miles into Persia, used to advance and retreat nearly a hundred miles a day. They train their horses for these expeditions as we should for a race; and their expression to describe a horse in condition for a chapow, (which may be translated a foraye,) is, that his flesh is marble.

[c] See vol. i. p. 315.

prince, was in his turn overthrown and slain by the gallant Shah Ismael, the first of the Seffavean monarchs. But his descendants continued for three centuries to reign over the territories of Bokhara. Their power had been declining for some years before Nâdir Shah invaded their country; and that event, by degrading their authority, may be said to have terminated their rule. The few princes subsequently elevated to the throne, were merely pageants in the hands of powerful chiefs. When the male line of the race of Chenghiz [d] became extinct, a son of a pious Syud, said to be descended from a female [e] branch of the royal family, was raised to the throne; and to this pageant, proud and jealous tribes granted their nominal allegiance. This internal discord had reduced the government of the Oosbegs to the lowest weakness. Its power was restored by one of the most extraordinary characters that any age or country has produced.

Beggee Jân [f] was the eldest son of the Ameer Daniel,

[d] Raheem Beg, who commanded the ten thousand Oosbegs sent with Nâdir, after his death usurped the chief power at Bokhara. He slew Abool Fyze Khan, and elevated his infant son, Abd-ool Momin Khân; but hearing some years afterwards, that the young prince, when practising archery, had aimed at a water-melon, in which he saw a fancied resemblance to Raheem Beg, and said, "Now for the head of Atta Baba," or father-tutor, the name he gave to Raheem Beg, the latter conceived he cherished designs of revenging his father, and directed his death in a manner that should make it appear accidental. This was effected by one of his companions running against him when standing on the brink of a well. He was the last male descendant of Chenghiz.—MEER YUSUPH ALI's *MS.*

[e] The prince so elevated is termed Khaujah Zadah, or son of a Khaujah. The title of Khaujah, or Shaikh, is in Tartary given only to the descendants of the prophet, or of the three first caliphs, Aboobeker, Omar, and Osman. But it is the custom for the kings of Tartary, as it had been for those of Persia, to marry their daughters to pious Syuds; and the children selected as pageants were descendants of the royal family by female branches.

[f] The name of this extraordinary man was Ameer Maâssoom: his title was Shah Moorâd, which signified the "desired king;" but he is best known by his more familiar appellation of Beggee Jân, the name used by almost all his countrymen when speaking of this favorite prince. I shall, therefore, adopt it in preference to the others.

who, during his latter years, having obtained possession of the person of the nominal prince[g], exercised an almost absolute authority over the Oosbeg tribes inhabiting the territories immediately dependent on Bokhara. At his death, he divided his great wealth among his numerous family, but declared Beggee Jân his heir. That chief, however, who had for some time[h] clothed himself in the patched garment of a fakeer, or religious mendicant, instead of taking part in the contests for power among his brothers and near relations, shut himself up in a mosque, and forbade any person to disturb his religious meditations. He also refused to accept the share left to him of his father's wealth. "Take it," he said to those who brought it to him, "to the managers of the public charities. Bid them reimburse, as far as they can, those from whom it was extorted. I can never consent to stain my hands with money obtained by violence." The writer who states this fact asserts, that he attired himself in the coarse dress worn by those who supplicate for mercy, and, having hung a sword round his neck, proceeded to every quarter of Bokhara, imploring, with tears in his eyes, the forgiveness and blessings of the inhabitants for his de-

[g] The name of this pageant was Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân. He was the son of a Syud, or Khaujah, called Abd-ool Raheem Chakboottee, or "old clothes," (according to the MS. I here follow) from his custom of picking up old clothes, washing them, and making them up again, to bestow on the poor, or to use as garments for himself. Meer Yusuph Ali (the author of the MS.) adds, that the youngest son of Abd-ool Raheem had been chosen by Raheem Beg, when he conquered the tribes of Khaurizm, to be their king; and these turbulent subjects had yielded an obedience to the young Syud, which they would have given to no Tartar chief. But when Raheem Beg died, they put the pageant he had placed upon the throne to death.—MEER YUSUPH ALI'S *MS.*

[h] The Manuscript of Mahomed Ali Gunjavee states, that he had for many years led this life: but Meer Yusuph Ali asserts, that in his youth he was very licentious, that he did not retire from the world till he was thirty-five years of age, and that his father's death happened about a year afterwards. If we credit his account, Beggee Jân (like Henry V.) had been severely reprehended by the chief judge of his father's capital: but, unlike our generous prince, Beggee Jân, the moment he had the power, put the venerable Vizier of Bokhara, who had censured his conduct, to death.

ceased father, and offering his own life as an expiatory sacrifice for any sins or crimes which the Ameer Daniel might have committed. The character of Beggee Jân already stood high among the learned and religious; for he was deeply versed in theology, and had written many valuable tracts; but this was the first time he had presented himself to the people. At once astonished and delighted at such humility and sanctity in a person of his rank, they crowded around him as if he had been a prophet, and joined with him in prayers for blessings on his parent. After having thus[i] eradicated those feelings of revenge which the violence of his father's rule had excited, he retired to the principal mosque of the city, and gave himself up for several months[k] to devotion and mental abstraction. No one was allowed to approach him during this period, except some of his favorite disciples.

Beggee Jân, when he first assumed the holy mantle, had adopted the tenets of a Soofee. He now openly professed himself one of those visionary devotees, who, from having their souls continually fixed on the contemplation of the divine essence, expect to attain such a state of mental beatitude, as leads them to despise all the pleasures of this world,—above all, earthly power. Consistency required that, while he professed this doctrine, he should not easily comply with the inhabitants of Bokhara; who, wearied with the internal troubles caused by the ambition of his relations, earnestly solicited him to assume the government. The

[i] In this account I have followed the Manuscript of Mahomed Ali Gunjavee. Meer Yusuph Ali states, that he only went over part of Bokhara, and deputed Moollah Meer Hashem to go over the remainder of the city. The difference is immaterial. We are told by the former, that one man alone refused to join in the prayer for the Ameer Daniel. "That noble," he said, "extorted money from me, and I cannot render the act lawful by forgiving him." The sum was large; but Beggee Jân was instantly enabled to pay it, by the voluntary contributions of his enthusiastic followers.

[k] One of the writers of his life says, that he remained in this state of abstraction for twelve months, during which he composed the best of his works, the *Eyn-ool-Hikmut*, or "The Eye of Science."

populace, who were entirely devoted to him, assembled daily at the mosque where he resided, and attended him wherever he went. The first instance in which he used the influence and authority he had acquired, was in destroying all the drinking and gambling houses in Bokhara. These are said to have amounted to several thousands; and we are assured[1] that, so extraordinary was the veneration for the commands of this holy prince, even those who were ruined by this act aided in its accomplishment.

Some of Beggee Jân's brothers had been slain; and the danger in which his family were placed, from an increasing spirit of revolt among their followers, at last led them to join in the general request, that he would assume the government: but all was in vain, until a serious commotion in the capital, in which about a thousand citizens lost their lives, excited his compassion. On this occasion the nominal king, Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân, and all the nobles, assembled; and, coming to the mosque where he dwelt, compelled him to attend them to the tomb of his father, Ameer Daniel; and at that sacred spot he was solemnly invoked to support a falling state. Apparently overcome by their urgent entreaties, he promised to give his counsel and aid in the management of public affairs: but he refrained from active interference, till Niyâz Ali, a chief who had rebelled during the rule of his father, and had seized on the city of Sheher-sebz, made an inroad on the territories of Bokhara. This so roused his indignation, that he accepted the title of regent, and marched at the head of a large army to attack the invader; he not only forced him to retreat from the territories of Bokhara, but to abandon some of those countries of which he had for some time been in possession. Beggee Jân may, from this date, be deemed the actual ruler of the Oosbegs; for though he never assumed any title but that of regent, and continued to pay a nominal obedience to Abd-ool Ghâzee Khan, he exercised during

[1] Persian MS.

the remainder of his life an absolute and undisputed authority. No prince was ever more unanimously chosen to fill the seat of power; and his first care, after assuming the government, was to shew his gratitude by some salutary regulations for the administration of justice, the collection of revenue, and the payment of the army.

Beggee Jân studiously rejected all those claims to respect and obedience which he had inherited from his father, the Ameer Daniel; who had not only been for a short period the ruler of the Oosbegs, but was the chief of a powerful tribe. His artful son knew too well the jealousies and resentments with which such claims were associated, to desire that they should appear as the foundation of his authority: therefore, in framing regulations for the management of public affairs, he gave to every institution a shape suited to his own character; and he desired always to be considered as a religious recluse, who had been compelled by his countrymen to exercise regal power; but who was resolved, so far as the discharge of his duties would permit him, to maintain, amid all temptations, the same rigid austerity and self-denial, as he should if he had never been called to a throne. The splendid court at which the nobles had been accustomed to attend was abolished: in its place he established what may be termed a hall of justice, in which he sat as president, aided by forty moollahs [m], or learned men [n]. All who had complaints to make came to this hall; but the prosecutor was never allowed to speak, unless the accused was present. No person, however high his rank, dared to refuse [o] a sum-

[m] One Manuscript states that these courts were only held on Mondays and Fridays. It also asserts that each moollah held in his hand a volume of Beggee Jân's works.

[n] They were supported by a daily stipend, from the fund for public charity; which, on account of its more sacred character, was made the general treasury of the empire.

[o] This is the case in all patriarchal governments, particularly among the Arabs. The Imâm of Muscat, a powerful prince, is compelled by usage to appear before the cauzee, or judge, of his own capital, if summoned by any of his subjects who deems himself aggrieved.

mons to attend this court. A slave could cite his master before it. Beggee Jân [p] listened with great patience to the statement of both parties; and, in all cases not criminal, sent them away, recommending an amicable adjustment of their difference. If they complied, the cause terminated; if not, he took notes at their reappearance of the evidence produced; and these were given, with his opinion, to the moollahs, who were directed to prepare a fetwâh, or decision, according to the holy law. The parties, even after this proceeding, had a week allowed them to accommodate their dispute; but if that elapsed without their doing so, the sentence was passed, and became irrevocable.

Criminal justice was administered according to the Koran. Robbers were punished with death; thieves by the loss of their right hands; drunkards were publicly whipt; and smoking tobacco [q] was forbidden under severe penalties. The strictest performance of their religious duties was enjoined to all classes: the police officers of Bokhara, we are told [r], were continually employed in driving the inhabitants to the mosques to hear the stated prayers [s]; and they were authorized to use their whips, to awaken the devotion of the negligent [t]. Any person desirous of improving in religious knowledge was admitted to the colleges of the city, and received daily subsistence. We can hardly credit the accounts of the number of these students, who are said at one period to have exceeded thirty thousand.

Beggee Jân abolished all duties except on foreign goods.

[p] Persian MS.

[q] The learned and religious Mahomedans are divided in their opinion about the legality of smoking tobacco, drinking coffee, &c. which have come into general use since the death of Mahomed. The more severe maintain that, as they have an inebriating quality, they are virtually prohibited by the Koran.

[r] Persian MS.

[s] These are said five times a day.

[t] We are also informed, that each of these officers had a small book, to aid him in interrogating those he met on their knowledge of the proper prayers; and if he found any ignorant, he had a right to punish him.

No monopolies were suffered; and revenue was only collected from crown lands. But the Jizyât[u], or "regulated tax on infidels," was exacted; and the Zukât[x], or "established charity," was levied on all believers, not excepting the soldiers, who had before been exempt. The money thus collected was put into the treasury; which was also supplied by the Khums, or "fifth part of all plunder taken from the enemy." This holy ruler, in imitation of the prophet Mahomed, claimed this share for the expenses of his government.

Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân, the nominal king, and his family, were supported by the royal estates. The feudal usage of paying chiefs for their military service, and that of their adherents, had long prevailed among the Oosbegs; and the heads of the principal families possessed large estates, and had rights of pasture for themselves and their followers on particular tracts. These grants were to provide for their subsistence; but Beggee Jân, when he obliged his soldiers to pay the tax of charity, enabled them to do so by giving them, according to their rank, a regular allowance in money[y], paid from that public treasury to which they contributed. These institutions were copied from those of Mahomed, and were meant to increase the veneration of the Oosbegs for their ruler, who in his own person gave an example of extraordinary frugality. He drew daily from the same fund from which he paid his soldiers, for the support of himself, his cook[z], his servant, and his tutor, a tungâh each, (a coin worth about five pence,) being the stipend allowed to the

[u] A tax of thirty per cent. on their property was levied from Jews, Christians, and Hindus.

[x] *Zukât* means *purification*; and is applied to this sacred tax, its payment being considered to purify and legalize the property on which it is paid. It is two and a half per cent. on personal property: but the rate of collecting it on different kinds of property varies; and no one is liable, who has not possessed the property nearly twelve months.

[y] He gave them on an average five tomâns (about five pounds) per annum.

[z] He gave his cook the name or title of Helâl-Puz, or "the dresser of what is lawful."

poorest student. The wife of Beggee Jân, who was of the royal family, was allowed only three tungâhs[a]. This princess had a fortune of her own, that placed her above the necessity of receiving this pittance; however, she took it daily, to please her husband, who often told her it was too much. "That which is necessary," Beggee Jân used to say to her, "is alone lawful;" and when she remonstrated, he was wont to add, "Learn, lady, to be content with little, that thy God may be content with thee." But the joy which he felt at the birth of a son[b] made him break through his rigid economy. No less than five pieces of gold[c] were allotted for the daily subsistence of the mother and her infant; and an equal sum was given for the support of two other sons the moment they were born. By this and other acts, Beggee Jân showed that he had determined to educate his children in those luxuries which he affected to despise; for he allowed his family to reside in a palace, while he himself dwelt in a small unfurnished room, or rather cell, into which persons of every class were admitted at all hours. He was generally clad in a coarse garment, and had the appearance of a common mendicant; but when he went to see his family, the skin of a deer was thrown loose over his shoulders.

The class of devotees to which Beggee Jân belonged, pride themselves not only on the contempt of dress, but of cleanliness; and a thousand anecdotes of him prove that he was not above seeking fame, by compliance with the most disgusting usages of the sect. We neither can nor ought to condemn conduct which assisted this extraordinary man in giving union and strength to the distracted and hostile tribes of his nation. No sentiment short of that reverence bordering on adoration, with which the Oosbegs regarded

[a] Persian MS.

[b] The present monarch, Hyder Turrâh. The name of his mother was Yeldeez Begum: she is termed in the MS. the daughter of Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân.

[c] About five pounds.

Beggee Jân, could have enabled him to accomplish the great objects he had in view; and all his knowledge, firmness, and justice, would have availed him nothing, had he not disarmed his enemies and attached his adherents, by a life of privation and the most rigid austerities. Ignorance and superstition are ever united; and the Tartars were easily persuaded, that a leader who contemned the worldly pleasures they prized, and who preferred the patched mantle and crooked staff of a mendicant priest to a royal robe and sceptre, must act under the immediate direction of the Divine Being. Their habits were not such as made it easy for them to understand how any man placed in such a situation could, from any other motive, be content to resign those enjoyments, which in their minds constituted the essence and charm of regal power.

The sacred character of Beggee Jân gave him strength to subdue almost the whole country [d] between the Oxus and Jaxartes. His army was chiefly composed of horse; his constant plan of war was by predatory invasions. After he had reduced almost all the tribes of his own nation, he was engaged in a war with Timoor Shah, King of the Affghans, over whom he obtained some advantages, more by his policy than his arms.

The reduction of Merv by Beggee Jân has been already noticed. This conquest enabled him to invade Khorassan: in the year after he advanced to Meshed; but finding it difficult to make himself master of it, he informed its inhabitants and his own army, that the holy Imâm Rezâ [e], who was interred there, had appeared to him in a dream, and commanded him to spare the holy city and its dependencies.

[d] The city of Sheher-Sebz, formerly called Kesch, opposed him for some years, but was at last taken; its governor, Niyâz Ali Khan, saved himself by flight.

[e] Beggee Jân told his followers, that the daily supplications made to the Imâm by the distressed inhabitants, deprived that sacred personage of sleep. "I know," said he, "that the Imâm liveth; and he shall not have to reproach me with disturbing his rest."

In obedience to this pretended mandate, he refrained from plundering the open suburbs and neighbouring villages, but he laid waste all such districts as were not deemed under the protection of the sacred city, and carried their inhabitants into bondage. Before he returned to Bokhara, he wrote circular letters to Shah Rokh Meerza and the other chiefs of Khorassan, informing them of his intention to revisit that province next season. He advised them to consult their own safety, and that of their subjects, by early submission and by adopting the creed of the Soonees. "Your conversion," he stated in these letters, "will prove a blessing to you; and it will add to the number of the miracles I have already performed."

From this period till his death, Beggee Jân made annual inroads into Khorassan. The heavy baggage, with a part of the army, were left several marches in the rear, while the advance, consisting wholly of cavalry, spread over the country. Every man of this corps carried seven days' provision for himself and horse; their object was, either to surprise the forts and walled villages, or to make prisoners of all the inhabitants travelling or labouring in the fields. If not ransomed, they were carried into bondage; the spoil in general consisted equally of men, women, cattle, sheep, and grain. The leader of the Oosbegs usually extorted a considerable sum of money from those towns which he could not reduce; for as the invasion always took place before the harvest, a refusal was followed by the instant destruction of every field within the reach of his followers. The plunder, we are told, was fairly divided. A fifth part belonged to the ruler, and constituted a considerable part of his revenue. Beggee Jân always led his own troops. He generally rode at the head of the army, dressed like a religious man of the poorest class, and mounted upon a small pony. He maintained a strict discipline in his camp[f]; but this means no more than that there was a good police, and that his soldiers

[f] Persian MS.

yielded a prompt and implicit obedience. Attention to the duties of religion was rigidly enforced, even amid these scenes of violence; a number of moollahs, or priests, marched with every division; and were sent, when occasion required, to negotiate with the chiefs whose territories were attacked. They were fitted for this employ by their superior education; and they were protected by their sacred character from insult and danger.

The policy of Beggee Jân, while he condemned himself to every privation, made him desire to be surrounded with splendour: nothing could present a greater contrast than the mean and disgusting appearance of this extraordinary man and all that personally appertained to him, with the wealth and magnificence of his nobles and principal officers. The writer of one of the tracts from which we have taken his history, was in the employ of Mameish Khan, chief of Chinnarân, when Beggee Jân invaded Khorassan. He was deputed to the camp of the invaders; and has given a very curious account of his mission.

Mameish Khan, it appears from this memoir, was in correspondence with Ishân Nukeeb [g], a noble of high rank among the Oosbegs, and a great favorite of their ruler. He gave his envoy a letter to this chief, with charge of two colts; one for his friend, the other for Beggee Jân. But the particulars will be best told in the words of this intelligent writer.

"I was introduced to Ishân Nukeeb, who was seated at the further end of a magnificent tent. He was a man of handsome appearance, uncommonly fair, but had a thin beard [h]. He asked after my health, and then after that of Mameish Khan, adding, 'Why has he not come himself?'

[g] Ishân Nukeeb-ul-Ashrâff, or "the illustrious," was the son of Ishân Mukdoom, the chief of Juzâk, who had married the daughter of Ameer Daniel. Ishân Mukdoom was consequently the nephew of Beggee Jân, with whom he was always a great favorite.

[h] This Tartar feature is deemed a great deformity by the Persians: according to their idea of manly beauty, the beard cannot be too long and bushy.

On my making some excuse, he added, 'I understand the reason: had I been alone, he would have paid me a visit; but he is afraid of Beggee Jân.' After these observations, he rose and retired to another tent, desiring me to repose myself where I was. A rich sleeping-dress was brought before me, and every person went away; but I had hardly lain down when I was sent for to attend Ishân Nukeeb, who very graciously insisted on my dining with him. The repast was luxurious: an hour after dinner tea was brought, and the favorite drank his in a cup of pure gold, ornamented with jewels: the cup given to me was of silver, inlaid with gold. Three hours after noon, he carried me to a large tent with five poles, where a number of persons were saying their prayers: we did the same; and then returned to his tent, which he had hardly entered, when a servant in waiting announced Utkhoor Soofee. This religious personage, for such he was, from the moment he entered occupied all the attention of Ishân Nukeeb, who appeared to treat him with the profoundest respect. When tea and coffee were served, he held the cup while Utkhoor Soofee drank. We had not sat long, before an officer came into the tent, and told Ishân Nukeeb that Beggee Jân desired he would wait upon him, and bring his guest. We arose immediately, mounted our horses, and proceeded with him. After riding a short distance we came to a one pole tent, which, I judged from its size and tattered appearance, must belong to some cooks or water-carriers. An old man was seated on the grass, so near it as to be protected from the sun by its shade. All dismounted, and advanced towards the old man, who was clothed in green, but very dirty. When near him, they stood with their hands crossed, in a respectful posture, and made their salutation. He returned that of each person, and desired us to sit down opposite to him. He appeared to shew great kindness to Ishân Nukeeb, but chiefly addressed his conversation to Utkhoor Soofee[1].

[1] The author states that Beggee Jân spoke to the Soofee at times like a

"After some time, the subject of my mission was introduced. I gave my letter to Ishân Nukeeb: he presented it to the old man in green, who, I now discovered, was Beggee Jân. That ruler opened it, read it, and put it into his pocket. After a short pause, he said, 'No doubt Mameish Khan has sent me a good horse;' and desired him to be brought. After looking attentively at the animal, he began to whisper and laugh with those near him: then addressing me, said, 'Why has not your master sent the horse Kârrâ-Goz[k], as I desired?'—'That horse has defects,' I replied, 'or he would have been sent.'—'With all its defects,' said Beggee Jân, smiling, 'he is twenty times better than the one you have brought.'

"While we were conversing, a great number of nobles came in; and I could not help observing the extraordinary richness and splendour of their arms and dresses. Beggee Jân returned the salute of every one in a kind and affable manner, and bade them be seated; but the shade of his small tent did not protect half of them from the sun. Soon after the chief fell into a deep reverie; and, till evening prayers were announced, appeared wholly absorbed in religious contemplation. At the time of prayer all arose, and retired. I slept that night in the tent of Ishân Nukeeb. At day-light, the army marched, and passed within a few miles of Chinnarân. After Beggee Jân had reached his encampment, he sent for me, and honored me with a private audience, at which he was very affable. 'Your master, Mameish Khan, is, I hear, always drinking wine.'—'I have not seen him drink,' I replied, 'and cannot speak to that point.'—'You are right,' said he, 'not to state what you have not seen. Tell Mameish Khan I have a regard for him; but as to Nâdir Meerza, (the ruler of Meshed,) he is a fool. Bid Mameish Khan write to Jaffier Khan, of

very young, and at others like a very old man; by which he means, that there was a mixture of the gay and grave in his conversation.

[k] Kârrâ-Goz means "black eye." It is usual to give names to high-bred horses in Persia.

Nishapore, and advise him to solicit my friendship, if he wishes to save his country from destruction.' A handsome dress was now brought for me, with a present in money. Every article of the dress was good, except the turban, which was of little or no value. This, however, Beggee Jân took himself, giving me his own in exchange[1], which was a great deal worse. I took my leave, and returned to the tent of Ishân Nukeeb, to whom I repeated all that had passed. He laughed very heartily, made me a handsome present; and I was on the point of retiring, when two men came at full gallop with a letter from Mameish Khan, stating that, notwithstanding the protection he had received, some of his followers had been taken by the Oosbegs. Ishân Nukeeb took me again to Beggee Jân, whom we found seated in his small tent on a goat's skin. He directed the captives to be brought, and made them over to me. He had before written a letter to Mameish Khan, which he reopened, wrote what he had done, and again committed it to my charge. As this affair was settling, his cook, a diminutive person with weak eyes, came into the tent. 'Why do you not think of dinner?' said Beggee Jân: 'it will soon be time for prayer.' The little cook immediately brought a large black pot, and making a fire-place with stones, put four or five kinds of grain and a little dried meat into it. He then nearly filled it with water, and having kindled a fire, left it to boil, while he prepared the dishes, which were wooden platters, of the kind used by the lowest orders. He put down three, and poured out the mess. Beggee Jân watched him; and the cook evidently understood from his looks when more or less was to be put into a dish. After all was ready, he spread a dirty cloth, and

[1] The exchange of turbans is deemed a pledge of friendship. If the author of this Memoir has not been led by vanity into exaggeration, there cannot be a more remarkable proof of the humility which Beggee Ján affected than his exchanging his turban with one allotted as a present to the envoy of an insignificant chief.

laid down a piece of stale barley-bread[m], which Beggee Jân put into a cup of water to moisten. The first dish was given to the ruler of the Oosbegs, the second was placed between Ishân Nukeeb and me, and the cook took the third for himself, sitting down to eat it opposite to his master. As I had dined, I merely tasted what was put before me. It was very nauseous, the meat being almost putrid; yet several nobles who came in ate the whole of our unfinished share, and with apparent relish, that could only be derived from the pleasure of partaking in the same fare with their holy leader.

"After dinner I obtained leave to depart. On my return to Chinnarân, Mameish Khan was pleased with the result of my mission: but he afterwards informed me, that, notwithstanding the fair promises of Beggee Jân, eighty-two of his people were during this season carried away by the Oosbegs."

The above account is alike descriptive of the character of Beggee Jân and of his court. It also shews the nature of his annual incursions into Khorassan; and exhibits a picture of despotic power under a very disgusting but imposing garb. This artful and able ruler fully succeeded in the great object of his life; for at his death, a few years after the events that have been recorded, his eldest son, Hyder Turrah, ascended the throne of Bokhara, and assumed, as his father had always intended, the name and dignity of a sovereign.

Beggee Jân's army is said to have amounted to sixty thousand horse; but in his invasions of Khorassan he was seldom attended by more than half that number. Though occasionally severe, his administration was on the whole lenient and just. He never assumed the title of king. On the seat which he generally used, his name, Ameer Maassoom, the son of the Ameer Daniel, was engraven in the centre; round it was inscribed the following sentence:— "Power and dignity, when founded on justice, are from God; when not, from the devil."

[m] The author adds, "God knows in what year of the Hijrah this bread had been baked."

The union of the various Oosbeg tribes under Beggee Jân, and the exaggerated reports of his character and success, had spread such alarm over Persia, that all who were unbiassed by family or feudal feelings rejoiced in a termination of internal wars, which had raised an able and warlike monarch to the throne, and placed their country in a condition to resist invasion; for the glory of the best of those conquerors who had issued from the plains of Tartary was associated with rapine and death. And though Persia had attained its greatest happiness[a] and splendour under some of their descendants, men who had the prospect of being swept away by the torrent could find little consolation in the hope that, when its destructive waves had subsided, it might improve and fructify the soil over which it had passed.

Chapter XIX.

THE LIFE OF AGA MAHOMED KHAN, KAJIR, THE UNCLE AND PREDECESSOR OF THE PRESENT KING: WITH A BRIEF NOTICE OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS SINCE THE ELEVATION OF THE REIGNING MONARCH.

Many events in the life of Aga Mahomed Khan have been necessarily anticipated; but the interest which attaches to his extraordinary character, and the claim he has on our attention, not only as the founder of a dynasty, but as the uncle and immediate predecessor of the reigning monarch, call for a short retrospect of those causes which enabled him to mount the throne of Persia.

The history of his tribe has been before given. When they were settled in Armenia, the circumstance of one part

[a] There can be no doubt that the happiest and most glorious era of Persian history was when it was governed by the first monarchs of the Seljookian dynasty.

having their pastures higher on a river than another, first separated them into two branches, termed "the higher" and "the lower[o]." These two great divisions were subdivided into many smaller. Some families took their names from a chief, or from a village[p], near which they fed their flocks. When the Kajirs were divided, and sent to different quarters of the empire, by one of the Seffavean monarchs, the most considerable part was settled at Asterabad[q]. It consisted of families of both branches; and the heads of the Youkhâree, or "the higher," were considered as the first in rank, till Fatteh Ali Khan, who belonged to the Ashâkâ, or "the lower," was nominated general of the forces of Tâmâsp the Second. This station enabled him to assume the superiority in his tribe: but his right was reluctantly admitted; and, when he was put to death by Nâdir Shah, those who deemed themselves aggrieved by his usurpation rejoiced in his fall, and endeavoured to involve his only surviving son[r], Mahomed Hoossein Khan, in his ruin. The young chief was compelled to fly to the Turkumans, who dwell in the plains to the east of the Caspian. Several of his family[s] followed him; and he carried on a petty warfare with his enemies, whom he would probably soon have overcome, had they not been supported by Nâdir Shah and his descendants.

Adil Shah, the nephew and successor of Nâdir, when he established himself in Mazenderan, sent for two infant sons of Mahomed Hoossein, who had some time before been

[o] The Youkhâree-bâsh and Ashâkâ-bâsh.—*Persian MS.*

[p] Thus the Kajirs of Duwânloo took their name from Duwânloo, a village near Erivân, in the vicinity of which they were long encamped.

[q] The Zeâd-oghloo, or sons of Zeâd, have continued at Ganjah since the time of Abbas the Great. Their chief, Juâd Khan, was slain by the Russians.

[r] Fatteh Ali Khan had two sons, Mahomed Hoossein Khan and Mahomed Hussun Khan: the latter died young.

[s] Among these was Aliverdi Khan, the father of Nou Rôze, the Yeshkâgâsee-bâshee, or lord of requests to the reigning king.

taken prisoners, and commanded that the eldest [t], Aga Mahomed, then a child between five and six years of age, should be made an eunuch. This act of cruelty was meant to destroy every hope of accomplishing that very end which it ultimately promoted; for, by depriving the representative of a great family of those sensual enjoyments which in eastern countries too often enervate both the body and mind of such as, from their rank and condition, have the means of unbounded indulgence, it forced him to seek gratification from other sources: the attention of Aga Mahomed, from his early years, appears to have been directed to views of ambition and aggrandizement; and he pursued them through life with a callous perseverance and unrelenting severity, which at once marked the insensibility of his nature, and the deep impression made by the recollection of early wrongs.

After the death of Adil Shah, Aga Mahomed had obtained his release and joined his father, whom he accompanied, while yet a youth, through all the vicissitudes of his fortune. When his father was defeated and slain, he fell into the power of Kerreem Khan, by whom he was latterly treated with great kindness and indulgence. The whole time which he passed as a prisoner at Shiraz was employed in preparing himself, by the study of men and books, for the great scene in which he was destined to act; and Kerreem Khan used often to consult him in affairs of state [u]. Aga Mahomed did not withhold his counsel, though he cherished the most implacable hatred to the whole Zend family. He

[t] His name was Mahomed Khan; the title of Aga, or master, which is one of considerable respect, was always given to the principal eunuchs of the royal haram. It was applied to the young prince, and he bore it through life.

[u] Kerreem Khan used to call him Peeran-wisa. This celebrated minister of Afrâsiâb, it has been before mentioned, was the Nestor of the Turks; and the highest encomium on the political wisdom of an individual is to call him by this name.

often related an anecdote[x], which displays his feelings at this period, and gives an insight into his extraordinary character. "I had no power," he said, "of declaring openly that revenge which I always harboured against the murderers of my father, and the despoilers of my inheritance; but while I sat with Kerreem Khan in his hall of public assembly, I often employed myself in cutting his fine carpets with a penknife which I concealed under my cloak, and my mind felt some relief in doing him thus secretly all the injury I could." When Aga Mahomed Khan mentioned this, the carpets that he had tried to destroy were become his own; and he used to add, "I am now sorry for what I did: it was foolish, and showed a want of foresight."

The misfortunes of his early life had not only taught him patience, but rendered him a profound adept in dissimulation: during the very period that he cherished the most inveterate resentment against Kerreem Khan and all his family, he had so won on the confidence of that ruler, that Kerreem not only gave him a liberal allowance to live upon, the freedom of going wherever he chose in the city, and the use of his best horses, with liberty to hunt over the neighbouring country, but proposed to employ him in quelling a rebellion which his brother, Hoossein Ali Khan, had excited in Mazenderan. Meerza Jaffier, the minister of Kerreem Khan, prevented the execution of this design; and Aga Mahomed Khan had the generosity, when sovereign of Persia, to mark, by his kindness to the relations of the minister, his gratitude for his conduct[y]. "Meerza Jaffier," he observed, "acted from no feeling but attachment to his master: he nevertheless saved my life; for had I been sent to Mazenderan, I should have been compelled to rebel; and the power of Kerreem Khan was so great, that I must have been destroyed."

[x] This anecdote was related to me by Hajee Ibrahim, who was for many years the sole minister of Aga Mahomed Khan.

[y] MS. History of Aga Mahomed Khan.

The manner in which Aga Mahomed Khan made his escape[1] from Shiraz, on the death of Kerreem Khan, has been already noticed: he fled with almost incredible speed to Mazenderan, and immediately declared himself independent. He was at this period thirty-six years of age. Though his frame was slender, his frugal diet and his habits of exercise made him capable of suffering any fatigue or hardship. He might be said to live on horseback; every moment that he could spare from other occupations was given to the chase, which was his only amusement. His heart is said to have been as hardened as his body; but the natural severity of his temper, during his progress to that sovereign power which after a struggle of eighteen years he attained, was checked by his prudence, which led him not only to conciliate his friends by kindness, but to forget his wrongs, and even to forgive some of his most inveterate personal enemies. We cannot praise too highly the wisdom which, when he had the power of revenge, pardoned those chiefs of the hostile branch of the Kajirs who had not only been concerned in murdering his father and other relations, but had deprived him of his title to the name of man, and had rendered him, with all his power, an object of pity to the lowest of his subjects. The generous policy which terminated the blood feud that had so long subsisted among the Kajirs, gave the throne of Persia to their chiefs; and Aga Mahomed was too sensible of the importance of the union he had established, to disturb it by the recollection of past injuries. He obtained attachment by bestowing confidence: among those who were most honoured in his government, were persons from whom he had received the greatest insults[2] in his adversity.

When he fled from Shiraz, he was only attended by seventeen followers. He refused to halt at Isfahan, though invited to do so; but he rested one night near Teheran,

[1] He reached Isfahan on the third day of his flight. The distance is about two hundred and fifty-one miles.

[2] Some of those chiefs still enjoy the favour and confidence of his successor, the reigning monarch.

and was kindly treated by the governor[b]. The moment he entered Mazenderan[c], he was joined by a number of his tribe, who acknowledged him as their chief: but he soon discovered that he had the most serious opposition to expect from his own family. Some of his brothers[d] declared against him: one of them, Moorteza Kooli, who had assembled a body of troops, proclaimed himself king. A petty war was carried on for four years with various fortune. Aga Mahomed, though at first successful, was surprised and made captive at Balfrosh, through the treachery of his brother, Rizâ Kooli, who loaded him with chains, and deliberated whether he should deprive him of sight or put him to death[e]. His prisoner, however, had secret friends among the persons employed to guard him; and their exertions, with the efforts of his two brothers, Jaffier Kooli and Moostâphâ Kooli, who remained faithful to his interests, restored him to liberty and power. His brother, Rizâ Kooli, was compelled to fly, and retired to Meshed, where he died. Moorteza Kooli soon afterwards took refuge in Russia, where he became the instrument of the ambitious designs of the Empress Catherine.

It has been before stated, that the moment Aga Mahomed received intelligence of the death of Ali Moorad Khan, he collected all the troops he could, and entered Irak. His army increased as he advanced: the flight of Jaffier Khan made him master of Isfahan without a battle, for the skirmish at Kashan deserves not that name. When compelled to retreat by the defection of part of his army, instead of returning to Mazenderan, he repaired the fortifications of

[b] Meerza Ali Nuckee.

[c] He intercepted part of the revenue of Mazenderan, which was proceeding under a weak convoy to Shiraz.

[d] Aga Mahomed had five half-brothers by a different mother: Moorteza Kooli Khan, Rizâ Kooli Khan, Moostâphâ Kooli Khan, Jaffier Kooli Khan, and Mehdee Kooli Khan. His own brother, Hoossein Kooli Khan, had been put to death by the Turkumans, when he fled from Zuckee Khan. He left two sons, of whom the reigning monarch is the eldest.

[e] Moollah Mahomed's History of the Kajirs.

Teheran [f], which he appears to have resolved to make his capital; from its vicinity to Mazenderan, and its central situation amid the pasture lands of those Turkish tribes on whose support he chiefly depended.

Several powerful chiefs of Aderbejan, Kûrdistan, and Irak, had joined the standard of Aga Mahomed; some still wavered between him and Jaffier Khan; while others, presuming on the numbers of their followers, hoped that the struggle between the Kajir and Zend tribes might favour their own views of ambition. In his conduct toward these nobles, Aga Mahomed exhibited profound dissimulation. His object was to destroy all whom he could not expect to attach; but he always tried every expedient that art could suggest, before he had recourse to violence. Ali Khan, a chief of the Affshâr tribe, had shown a disposition to aspire to the throne, and had assembled a number of followers in Aderbejan. Instead of treating him as an enemy, Aga Mahomed addressed a letter to him as an equal, inviting him to a meeting, and calling on him, by their affinity as chiefs of Turkish tribes, to combine against the princes of the Zend family. Ali Khan was a sensible and brave man; he preferred open hostility to so dangerous a friendship; and, expecting an attack, awaited him on the plains of Sooltaneah [g]. Aga Mahomed marched towards him, apparently intending to give him battle: but when the armies met, he sent one of his brothers, accompanied only by two horsemen, to the camp of Ali Khan, with the following message to be delivered in the hearing of all his officers and attendants. "I am desired by Aga Mahomed Khan, to ask why two brave Turkish tribes should give delight to their enemies by shedding each other's blood? Let the Affshârs enjoy their present lands, their chief, his government [h], and continue united with the Kajirs in friendship,

[f] The citadels of Persian walled towns are called Argh: they are generally square, with very high walls flanked by lofty turrets.

[g] Persian MS.

[h] The Khumsâ, or five districts, of which Zunjân is the capital.

which must tend to their mutual advancement, and to the destruction of all their enemies." This overture made some impression on the chief, and more on his followers. It led to further negotiation; Aga Mahomed prevailed, and Ali Khan consented to be the first noble of his court. His army was retained; and he was treated with such regard and even confidence, that all his alarm vanished. When lulled into fatal security, he was invited to a banquet given by one of the principal persons of the court: late at night, when inebriated with wine, he received a message from Aga Mahomed, desiring to consult with him immediately on a subject of importance. He hastened to obey, and would not even wait to put on his arms. The moment he entered the palace, he was seized and had his eyes put out, without any of his adherents knowing what had happened. Part of his troops were disbanded next morning, and part taken into the service of Aga Mahomed. The whole transaction was conducted without the loss of a life or the slightest disturbance. The treachery which had deceived and destroyed a gallant rival, was by flatterers called justifiable policy; and there can be no doubt, that the terror impressed on a number of ambitious nobles by the fate of Ali Khan, greatly promoted the success of his enemy.

The events of the war against Jaffier Khan, and his son, Lootf Ali, have been related. The inhabitants of Kerman were massacred. The pillage continued nearly three days; but, as it was stopped the moment intelligence was received of Lootf Ali having been made prisoner, we must conclude that Aga Mahomed in this, as in almost all instances, acted less from passion than policy: he believed his enemy had escaped, and meant, by a terrible example, to prevent any other city or province of Persia from granting him their support.

In surveying the conduct of a monarch like Aga Mahomed Khan, we should guard ourselves against those impressions which many of his actions are calculated to make. Living under a government protected by laws, we associate

cruelty and oppression with every act of a despot. His executions are murders; and the destruction of helpless citizens (who in an assault too generally share the fate of the garrison) is deemed a horrid massacre. But we must not assume that justice is always violated, because the form of administering it is repugnant to our feelings; and we should recollect, that even among civilized nations the inhabitants of towns taken by storm are exposed to pillage and slaughter, without any charge of barbarity against those by whom they are plundered, or put to the sword. The punishment of bodies of men to deter others of similar condition, is, perhaps, the only mode by which uncivilized nations can be preserved in peace. When martial clans, united in name, in feeling, and in action, are so devoted to their leaders, that neither imprudence nor crime can absolve their allegiance, it becomes impossible to take away power from the chief, without depriving his followers of the means of opposition or revenge; and it is only by making examples of whole classes of his rebellious subjects, that an absolute monarch, who rules over a warlike and turbulent people, can expect to strike the terror indispensable to preserve himself upon the throne, and to establish the tranquillity of his dominions.

The extraordinary rise of Nâdir Shah and of Kerreem Khan had destroyed that sacred regard for the royal family, which had protected the weakest of the Seffavean monarchs. Every leader who had followers thought that chance might give him the crown. The usurpation of the kingly name was so common, that it was no longer held in respect; amid the continual change of rulers, men lost their habits of obedience to the only paramount authority recognised by the usages of the country. This is no overcharged picture: when the success of Aga Mahomed Khan obtained him the rule of Persia, the kingdom was in a state of complete anarchy. The chiefs of the principal tribes cherished plans of inordinate ambition. Their followers, accustomed to scenes of revolt and plunder, were adverse to any power

which deprived them of their harvest. The towns and villages had been pillaged so often, that many of their inhabitants, compelled to abandon their homes, sought relief in the violence by which they had been ruined; while others became voluntary exiles. Commerce had greatly declined; for, besides the hazards which merchants incurred from the upstart rulers of the day, the public roads were infested by plunderers, who seized on all property found unguarded.

Never was a character better formed to remedy these evils than Aga Mahomed Khan. The flatterers who praise his justice, admit that he had no mercy. Punishment, they argue, was never wantonly inflicted; but the guilty were never spared. His object was to restore Persia to tranquillity; and to effect this, he resolved to destroy all in any way likely to disturb it. He had forgiven some of his most inveterate enemies; but when policy did not require him to renounce his resentment, he seemed prone to implacable and extravagant revenge. This disposition was shewn after his triumph over Lootf Ali Khan. Not satisfied with putting to death or depriving of sight[i] all the relations of that prince, he dug up the bones of the virtuous Kerreem Khan, and directed their removal to Teheran; where they were deposited with those of Nâdir Shah, (which were subsequently brought from Khorassan) at the entrance of the palace[k], that he might every day trample on the graves of the two principal foes of his family. Such an act could only excite disgust and indignation: but on this occasion, the usual policy of Aga Mahomed gave way to a callous malignity; from long brooding on past injuries, he appears to have found delight in a base triumph over the remains

[i] Zein-ool-abdeen's Anecdotes.

[k] A Persian poet had the boldness to write this satirical epigram on the sacrilegious act. "The malice of revenge has been disappointed; and the sacred depository of the remains of the virtuous Kerreem Khan are, by the just decree of Providence, constantly illuminated by his enemies." Such was the case; for the place where he was interred, being the entrance of the palace, had lamps burning through the night.

of his enemies, and in the unmanly indulgence of a posthumous revenge.

Every action of Aga Mahomed was calculated to inspire dread among the higher ranks of his subjects: but though severe to all who exercised power, whether from station or birth, he was kind and indulgent to his soldiers and to the mass of the population; and every step he took to spread the terror of his name, and to secure the crown for his family, promoted their happiness and prosperity. On every occasion, he shewed a perfect knowledge of the characters by whom he was surrounded; of which we have a remarkable instance in his conduct to Hajee Ibrahim. When he was encamped in Kerman, and his minister was proceeding to join him, one of the royal guards, who met the latter on the road, behaved to him with extreme insolence. The Hajee directed some of his followers to seize the man and chastise him: it was in vain that those who were with him begged him to refrain from an act which, they conceived, would inevitably ruin him. "If Aga Mahomed Khan," said he sternly, "can countenance by his protection the insolence of a fellow like this to a man of my rank, the sooner I am destroyed the better." When he arrived in camp, he found the monarch informed of the transaction: at their meeting he exclaimed, "So you have punished one of my servants, Hajee? I am grateful to you for having done so: you are exactly the person I want to keep these rascals in order!" A short personal knowledge confirmed all his favorable impressions of the talents of Hajee Ibrahim; and he early resolved on making him prime minister. No measure of his reign contributed more to his success than his employing this extraordinary man, whose genius was suited to his high office, and who continued, while Aga Mahomed lived, to merit and enjoy the unbounded favour and confidence of his sovereign.

Three of Aga Mahomed Khan's brothers, who were competitors for the throne, had fled from Persia. Moostâphâ Kooli Khan, whom he suspected of designs against

his person, was deprived of sight. There remained only Jaffier Kooli Khan, to whose courage and enterprise he was in a great degree indebted for his crown. This prince had always preserved his allegiance, and had on several occasions been the successful mediator between Aga Mahomed and other members of his family. Although he was known to be ambitious, there never was any cause to believe that he cherished designs against his elder brother; but it was not expected that he would grant equal submission to his nephew, who had been declared heir to the throne. Jaffier Kooli had asked his brother to give him the government of Isfahan: but he had been refused; and he was subsequently appointed to the rule of a district in Mazenderan. Irritated at this treatment, which he suspected to proceed from a doubt of his fidelity, he tried by excuses to evade a summons to attend at court. Aga Mahomed was alarmed at this symption of disaffection: he dreaded the valour of Jaffier Kooli, and feared an open rupture with a chief who was the idol of the soldiers of his own tribe, and towards whom any suspicion or harshness must appear the blackest ingratitude. He had recourse to art therefore, and prevailed on his mother[1] to go to Mazenderan, and appease her son: he desired her to promise him the government of Isfahan, or any thing that would restore his confidence and friendship. All he required was, that the brother he loved would come to Teheran on his way to Isfahan, and assure him of his forgiveness. The brave and generous Jaffier Kooli, though deceived by these protestations, still hesitated about trusting himself in Aga Mahomed's power. At last however he con-

[1] Olivier says, that Aga Mahomed Khan went himself to his brother, and regained his confidence by his humility and art. The violent temper of Jaffier Kooli, he informs us, led him to load his brother with reproaches; they were patiently borne by the cool, designing monarch, who at last succeeded in lulling him into security. There is no difference in other points between the relation of this traveller and the MS. I have followed. The latter is written by one who professes to have been a witness of the whole transaction.

sented; but not before he had received the most solemn assurances of safety, and a promise that he was only to stay one night at Teheran before he proceeded to his government. When he reached Teheran he was welcomed with every appearance of cordiality; and the night passed in peace. Next day Aga Mahomed, after giving him some instructions for his conduct at Isfahan, observed, "You have not, I believe, yet looked at my new palace; walk there with Bâbâ Khan, and after you have seen it, return to me." He went to look at it: at the moment he entered the portico, some assassins who had been stationed there, fell upon him and slew him [m]. The body was carried to Aga Mahomed Khan, who mourned over it with an appearance of the most frantic grief. He desired Bâbâ Khan (by which name he always called the present monarch, then quite a youth) to approach; and bade him observe the corpse of the bravest of men and the best of brothers. Then loading the young prince with abuse, he exclaimed, "It is for you I have done this! The gallant spirit that lately animated that body would never have permitted my crown to rest upon your head! Persia would have been distracted with internal wars. To avert these consequences, I have acted with shameful ingratitude, and have sinned deeply against God and man!" These sentiments might be sincere: the public expression of them had the effect of mitigating the horror at this murder; and men believed, or affected to believe, that the desire of promoting the general weal was paramount to all other feelings in the breast of their sovereign.

The Turkuman tribes who inhabit the plains near Asterabad have been described. Aga Mahomed Khan's father had always found a refuge among them when in distress. They gladly welcomed a fugitive of rank, whose name and

[m] In one account of this horrid transaction it is stated, that Bâbâ Khan (the present king, then a boy of fourteen) was informed of what was intended, and directed to complain of slight indisposition and remain in the rear, when his uncle reached the place where the assassins were stationed.

followers aided them in plundering the neighbouring countries: but they had slain his brother, Hoossein Kooli, when pursued by Zuckee Khan, and had recently committed the most cruel excesses upon the inhabitants of Asterabad. These acts of aggression and violence Aga Mahomed resolved to revenge. Having marched into their country, he retaliated with a severity that filled even their savage minds with terror. He brought away a number of their wives and children, some of whom were made slaves, and the rest kept as hostages for the good conduct of their families. We are informed by the historian of Aga Mahomed Khan, that many of these high-minded women perished by their own hands, to escape a captivity which they thought might subject them to insult or dishonor.

The condition of Georgia, when Aga Mahomed Khan became the sovereign of Persia, has been already noticed. Its tributary prince, the aged Heraclius, taking advantage of the distracted situation of Persia, had by a formal act transferred his allegiance from the kings whose paramount authority his ancestors had acknowledged for centuries, to the sovereigns of Russia. His motive was declared to be a desire to release his Christian subjects from the violence and oppression of Mahomedan superiors, and to place them under the protection of a great nation of their own religion. It was not to be expected that any monarch of Persia, whenever his kingdom was restored to union and peace, would submit to have one of its finest provinces thus alienated; and Aga Mahomed Khan, the moment he had subdued his rivals, resolved to compel Heraclius to return to obedience. But before an account is given of his measures to re-establish his power over Georgia, it will be necessary to trace the progress of the connexion which its prince had formed with Russia, as that was the immediate cause which provoked the vengeance of the Persian sovereign.

Peter the Great had formed plans, in concert with the court of Constantinople, for partitioning the north-western

parts of Persia[n]. These projects had been defeated by the genius of Nâdir Shah; but the distracted state of the kingdom led Catherine to revive in part the schemes of her predecessor. She accepted the overtures of Heraclius to place his country under her protection; and a formal treaty[o] was

[n] See vol. i. p. 455.

[o] The following is the substance of this treaty:—

Article 1st. Heraclius, the Prince of Georgia, renounces his dependence upon Persia, and places himself, heirs, and successors, under the protection of the Empress Catherine, her heirs, and successors.

2nd. The Empress Catherine grants her protection to the Prince of Georgia, and not only guarantees his actual possessions, but all which may become his in future partitions.

3rd. The Prince of Georgia agrees that his heirs shall solicit and receive their investiture from the empress, her heirs, &c., and shall swear to be faithful to the monarchs of Russia.

4th. The Prince of Georgia agrees that he will have no communication with neighbouring states, except with the advice and knowledge of the Russian general commanding the forces, or the ambassador residing in his country.

5th. The ambassador whom the Prince of Georgia keeps at the empress's court, is to have suitable rank.

6th. Her majesty the empress promises, for herself and successors, first, That she will regard the enemies of Georgia as her enemies, and that the people of that country shall be included in any peace with the Ottoman Porte or any other state; secondly, That she will maintain the Prince Heraclius and his heirs and posterity on the throne of Georgia; and thirdly, That she will leave wholly and entirely to the Prince of Georgia the internal administration of his country and the imposition of taxes.

7th. The Prince of Georgia promises, for himself and heirs, first, To be always ready with his army to serve the Empress of Russia; secondly, To act in all that relates to her service with the advice of her commanders, to comply with their requisitions, and to guarantee her subjects against all injustice and oppression; thirdly, In the promotion of officers in his service, to consider chiefly those who have deserved well of Russia, because on that empire the safety and prosperity of Georgia depends.

8th. Her majesty the Empress of Russia consents that the first Archbishop of Georgia shall rank with the metropolitans of the eighth class, taking precedence after the Metropolitan of Tobolsk; and the empress is to give him the title of a member of "the Most Holy Synod."

9th. The nobles of Georgia shall, in every part of the Russian empire, enjoy the same prerogatives and advantages as the nobles of Russia.

10th. The inhabitants of Georgia shall be at liberty to settle in Russia, and to return to their own country. The Georgian prisoners, released either by

concluded, by which that prince, in his own name and that of his heirs, transferred his allegiance from the kings of Persia to her and her successors; while she, on the part of herself and heirs, engaged to protect him and his people: and, by a specific article, she not only guaranteed all his actual possessions, but promised to extend the same protection to "other territories that might hereafter fall to his share." This expression [p], and an attempt made the same year to form a settlement [q] near the city of Ashraff in Mazenderan, give reason to conjecture that Catherine cherished plans beyond an alliance with Heraclius: if this was so, circumstances must have prevented their prosecution, as the settlement in Mazenderan was abandoned, and the corps sent to aid the Georgian prince, after it had remained four years, was suddenly recalled, when employed at the siege of Gunjah, which was raised in consequence.

arms or capitulation, shall return to their homes on paying what has been disbursed for their ransom or expenses. The Prince of Georgia promises to act in the same manner toward Russians made captives by neighbouring states.

11th. Georgian merchants shall pass and repass into Russia at pleasure, and enjoy equal privileges with Russian merchants; and the Prince of Georgia promises to concert measures with the Russian generals to give more facility to the commerce carried on by Russians in his territories.

12th. The present convention or treaty shall be for ever.

13th. The articles of this treaty shall be ratified in six months, or sooner if possible.

Executed in the fortress of Georges, the twenty-fourth of July, 1783.

Signed { PAUL POTEMKIN, PRINCE IVAN-BAGRATION.
PRINCE GARSEWAN-ISCHAWTS-CHAWDSEW.

[p] It has been asserted, that this merely alluded to Gunjah and parts of Imeretta, which Heraclius claimed.

[q] The historian of the Kajir family states, that in the year 1783 a Russian nobleman, with some armed boats, arrived near Ashraff, and requested leave to establish a commercial factory; but his companions bought so dear and sold so cheap, that it was apparent pecuniary profit could not be their object. Aga Mahomed consequently suspected them of some sinister design, and directed them to be imprisoned. They were invited to a feast, and having drunk freely, were seized; but when sent to the king, he listened to their excuses, released them, and gave them dresses of honour. He warned them however against evil designs.

Aga Mahomed Khan, when he resolved on attacking Georgia, determined, by the celerity of his movements, to prevent Heraclius receiving support from Russia. The chiefs of his army had been directed, when he returned from the conquest of Kerman, to assemble with all their followers very early in the ensuing spring; and we are informed that the forces which met near Teheran, in the month of April[r], were nearly sixty thousand men[s]. Their destination was unknown till the moment of their march, when they moved in three divisions. The right column took the route of Mogâm, Shirwan, and Dâghestan; the left moved towards Erivân, the capital of Armenia; and the centre, with Aga Mahomed Khan at its head, proceeded to Sheshâh, the principal fortress in the Kârâbâgh, a fine district which stretches for many miles along the left bank of the Araxes[t]. The column which moved on the right through the countries near the Caspian, met with no resistance. Every chief submitted or fled: but the khans of Erivân and Sheshâh were encouraged by Heraclius to oppose the Persian monarch; and the aged waly himself, when summoned to appear at court and pay the accustomed tribute, returned for answer, "that he acknowledged no paramount sovereign but the Empress Catherine of Russia."

The army of Aga Mahomed was almost entirely composed of horse, so that he could not hope to subdue either Erivân or Sheshâh: he resolved therefore to rest satisfied with the nominal submission of their governors, and to leave strong bodies to watch or rather blockade them; while he marched to Teflis, the capital of Georgia. He had before directed the centre and left columns to unite: they were joined at Gunjah by the right division. With this army,

[r] The author of the history of the Kajirs states, that Aga Mahomed marched from Teheran fifty-three days after the feast of Nou Rôze, or the vernal equinox, which corresponds with the 14th of May.

[s] Olivier says they amounted to eighty thousand.

[t] He passed the river on a bridge constructed by Sulimân Khan, whom he had sent in advance for that purpose.

reduced by the corps he had detached, but still amounting to nearly forty thousand men, he advanced against Heraclius; who, though deprived of support from the Russians by the rapid operations of Aga Mahomed, nevertheless determined to meet the Persians in the field. He advanced with his whole force, which did not amount to a fourth of his enemy's, to a position fifteen miles from his capital. An action ensued: the Georgians fought with great valour; but they were overpowered by numbers [u], and compelled to fly. Their prince, with part of his family and some followers, found refuge in the neighbouring mountains; while the conquerors entered Teflis: a scene of carnage and rapine ensued pleasing to one who desired to make this city an example for such as dared to contemn his authority. The Mahomedan historian of Aga Mahomed Khan, after describing the barbarous and horrid excesses, observes, "that on this glorious occasion the valiant warriors of Persia gave to the unbelievers of Georgia a specimen of what they were to expect on the day of judgment." It is not easy to calculate the number who perished. Bigotry inflamed the brutal rage of the soldier. The churches were levelled with the ground; every priest was put to death [x]. Youth and beauty were alone spared for slavery. Fifteen thousand captives [y] were led into bondage; and the army marched back laden with spoil.

The condition of the unfortunate inhabitants who had fled to escape death, and who returned to mourn over their ruined

[u] Aga Mahomed during the action commanded a person to recite some verses from the Shah Nameh of Firdousee, to encourage the soldiers to heroic actions. This is a common practice in Persian armies.—*Persian MS.*

[x] The author of the Life of Aga Mahomed Khan states, that the priests were bound and thrown into the river which flows past the town.

[y] Moollah Mahomed Châr in the History of the Kajir Family states that the number was only fifteen thousand. The accounts I have received from the best-informed Georgians and Armenians, make it twenty-five thousand; and some of these appeared to have fair data for their estimate. It is probable that fifteen thousand were taken at Teflis, and the remainder from the towns and villages in Georgia.

houses and desolated fields, was almost as severe as that of the prisoners. Slavery was the state to which many of these had been doomed from their birth: and, if we except the great misfortune to which the younger captives[a] were exposed, of being educated in a different religion from their parents, their lot was not unhappy. The females from their superior beauty became in general the favorites of their harams, and some of them were married to their masters: while the males, according to the usage of the country, were treated with kindness and partiality. They almost invariably obtained their liberty when they embraced the religion of their conquerors; and as they grew up, were either enrolled as soldiers, or retained as domestics. In the former case they frequently rose to high command and station; in the latter they were always favored and confidential servants; and their children, being born in the house[a], were considered almost as relations of the family.

After having sacked Teflis, Aga Mahomed marched towards Gunjah; and being resolved to complete the subjugation of these provinces, remained during the winter encamped on the plain of Mogâm, near where the Cyrus, one of the finest streams of Georgia, unites with the Araxes. He had appointed one of the principal chiefs[b] of his tribe to the government of Shirwan; but on receiving complaints of his violence and extortions, he recalled him. The inhabitants, encouraged by his disgrace, rose in a body and put him to death. This event greatly affected Aga Mahomed; and it was expected that he would make a terrible example; but he

[a] Numbers of those who had attained the age of maturity preserved their own religion, and among them many females. An affluent merchant told me he had offered marriage to a beautiful Georgian, whom he had purchased from a soldier, if she would become Mahomedan, but in vain: and "she prays so prettily," he added, smiling, "to her little images, that I have been half tempted myself to become an *idolater*."

[a] A remarkable instance of the light in which the Khânâh-zâd, or "house-born slaves," are considered, has been given in the Life of Timoor.—Vol. I. p. 290, *note*.

[b] Moostâphâ Khan *Dewânloo*.

seldom gave loose to his indignation, unless when policy dictated: when the former governor of Shirwan, who had before fled, came to solicit mercy for himself and his people, he freely forgave him; and his clemency was repaid by the complete submission of the province. The chief of Erivân[c] also propitiated his favor by obeying his summons; but Ibrahim Khulleel Khan, the governor of Sheshâh, still resisted; and as the Persian troops, from the want of artillery, were unable to take his fortress, their commander was compelled to rest satisfied with directing all the country around to be laid waste and plundered.

Though he had long enjoyed sovereign power, Aga Mahomed had not yet been invested with the royal tiara. He used to observe, that he had no title to the name of king, until he was obeyed throughout the whole ancient empire of Persia. After he had subdued Georgia, his courtiers pressed him to be crowned. He yielded with apparent reluctance: having assembled all his military chiefs, he pointed to a crown that had been prepared, and asked them whether they desired he should put it on. "Recollect," said he, "if I do, your toils are only commencing; for I cannot consent to wear the Persian crown, without as much power as has been enjoyed by the greatest sovereigns of Persia[d]." The leaders of his army, the ministers of his court, and the princes of his family, all joined in entreating that he would place it upon his head, and promised that their lives should be devoted to his glory. He complied; but he only assumed a small circular diadem ornamented with pearls[e]. He refused to wear the gorgeous crown of Nâdir Shah[f], the rich plumes of which denoted the kingdoms he had subdued: but he consented to gird on the

[c] His name also was Moostâphâ Khan.

[d] Persian MS.

[e] It was called the Kullah Kaianee. He only wore it on state occasions.

[f] Nâdir wore four plumes in his crown, to denote his power as paramount ruler of Affghânistan, India, Tartary, and Persia.

royal sabre, consecrated at the tomb[g] of the holy founder of the Seffavean family; and by that act became pledged to employ the sacred weapon in the defence and support of the Sheah faith, which, from the commencement of that dynasty, had become the national religion.

Aga Mahomed Khan collected a force still more numerous than that which had conquered Georgia, to subdue Khorassan. He proceeded thither by the route of Asterabad, to punish the Turkuman tribes, who had recommenced their plundering inroads. His march was directed to Meshed: as he advanced, he received the submission of all the petty chiefs[h]; none dared to oppose so numerous an army, led by a monarch known to be relentless. Among those who proffered their allegiance was Isaak Khan[i], of Turbut-e-Hyderee. His enemies had endeavoured to prejudice Aga Mahomed against him by representing him as a Tajuck of low birth, whose usurpation of power was a dangerous example. The wise sovereign, however, disregarding these representations, distinguished him by his peculiar favor. Isaak Khan alone was not required to give hostages for his fidelity; and his attachment repaid this generous confidence.

The condition of Meshed, against which this expedition was chiefly directed, has been before described. The weakness and distraction of its rulers had reduced the inhabitants to a wretchedness which it appeared hardly possible to aggravate: but the late inroads of the Oosbegs had added to their misery; and they looked forward with more hope than alarm to the approach of Aga Mahomed, who professed

[g] The tomb is at Ardebil, whither the monarch must go to put on the sacred sword. The weapon is left one night on the tomb; during which the saint is invoked to be propitious to the sovereign who is to wear it. Next day, when it is girded on, the nobles are feasted, and large sums distributed to the poor.—*Persian MS.*

[h] The first that submitted was Ameer Goonâh Khan, of Kâbooshân, to whom Aga Mahomed Khan sent a Koran, containing an oath, with the royal seal affixed, promising him safety and protection.

[i] For the history of this chief, see vol. ii. p. 146.

that his only design was to pay his devotions at the tomb of the Imâm Rezâ; to restore the city, where the remains of that sacred person were interred, to prosperity; and to punish those who had sacrilegiously dared to plunder the mausoleum of the holy descendant of the prophet. His real motives were,—to establish his power over Khorassan; to check the inroads of the Turkumans and Oosbegs; and to possess himself of the wealth still appertaining to the miserable descendants of Nâdir, against whom it was believed by many that he cherished a vindictive spirit, on account of his grandfather's murder, and of the cruel wrongs he himself had sustained from the immediate successor of that conqueror.

Nâdir Meerza, the ruler of Meshed, fled, on Aga Mahomed's advance, into the Affghan territories, leaving his blind parent, the unfortunate Shah Rokh, to deliver the city to a monarch against whom resistance was deemed useless. When the Persian army advanced near the walls, Shah Rokh went out to meet its leader; who, after receiving his submission, walked on foot, attended by his nobles, to the tomb of the Imâm Rezâ, and knelt and kissed the ground in token of his devotion to the sacred remains.

Avarice was almost as strong in Aga Mahomed as the love of power; and he appeared even more desirous of possessing jewels than treasure. On the death of Lootf Ali Khan, he had obtained some of the richest brought from India by Nâdir Shah; and since his arrival in Khorassan he had recovered several of inferior value from the chiefs who had shared in the spoil of Nâdir's successors, and who now surrendered their dangerous wealth: for Aga Mahomed treated as the guiltiest of criminals all such as retained what he deemed the property of the sovereign. Shah Rokh, who had long ceased to exercise power, was yet believed to possess many precious stones of great value, which he had concealed even from his sons. They were demanded by Aga Mahomed: he denied his possessing them with the

most solemn oaths[k]; but in vain. Torture in all its forms was applied: and we almost cease to pity this degraded prince, when we find that his discoveries kept pace with the pains inflicted. Treasures and jewels were produced, which had been sunk in wells and built up in walls; and at last, when a circle of paste was put upon his head, and boiling oil poured into it, he discovered a ruby of extraordinary size and lustre, which had once decorated the crown of Aurungzebe, and was the chief object of Aga Mahomed's desire. That monarch[l], the moment he heard this jewel was found, expressed the greatest joy: he directed the torments to cease; and accused Shah Rokh, not altogether without justice, of being the author of the great miseries he had suffered. However, he most inhumanly directed that he should be immediately conveyed with his whole family to Mazenderan; and the wretched grandson of Nâdir terminated his life[m] a few days after.

Aga Mahomed Khan had despatched a mission[n] to Bokhara, with a letter to Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân, stating, "That he had heard of the usurpation of the royal power by a son of the Ameer Daniel, whence many evils had arisen; and true believers, made prisoners in Persia, were sold like cattle at the market-place of Bokhara." He called on Abd-ool Ghâzee Khân immediately to restore all the captives, and to beware in future how he provoked his vengeance. Beggee Jân, who received this letter, affected to

[k] Olivier, on what authority I know not, gives him the highest merit for his efforts to conceal riches which he deemed the only future dependence of his absent son. The mind is gratified at being able to feel unqualified indignation against an oppressor, and to compassionate the oppressed: but all the authorities in my possession give an opposite account.

[l] Persian MS.

[m] He died at Dâmghân in consequence of his tortures. He was sixty-three years of age.

[n] The MS. from which the account of Aga Mahomed's transactions at Meshed is drawn, is written by an intelligent and learned man, who was at Meshed when it was taken, and who appears to possess a full knowledge of the events of that period.

treat the Persian king with equal if not greater contempt. "I have heard," said the old priest, in a circular letter to the chiefs of Khorassan, "that *my lord eunuch*[o] is come among you: seize him if you can; if not, inform me, and I will punish him." These able rulers never encountered; had they lived to do so, it is difficult to pronounce which would have triumphed.

Aga Mahomed had sent an ambassador to Zemaun Shah, King of Cabool, to explain his motives for invading Khorassan, and to propose a union of forces for the conquest of Bokhara. If we may believe the Persian historian[p], the Affghan monarch agreed to the alliance; and every thing was prepared for an expedition into Tartary, when Aga Mahomed was called to protect his own dominions, invaded by a formidable army of Russians.

The Empress Catherine had learnt with horror the dreadful punishment inflicted on a prince and people whose crime was having sought her protection, and who were tempted to provoke their fate by their expectation of her support. Various conjectures have been formed about the reasons which prevented that support at an earlier period. An inhabitant of Georgia, who has given an account of this invasion, states that General Goodavitch was within six marches of Teflis in command of a Russian force of sufficient strength to defend it, but he refused to advance, though repeatedly solicited by Heraclius. He would not believe that the danger was so imminent, but thought that the account of Aga Mahomed's force was exaggerated; and that at all events he would never attack the capital of Georgia, before he had made himself master of Sheshâh and

[o] Beggee Jân constantly called Aga Mahomed Khan "Akhtâ Khan;" a title, of which "my lord eunuch" is a very delicate translation.

[p] Mahomed Hoossein Khan Karagoozoloo was the envoy to the King of Cabool; and the historian of Aga Mahomed Khan states, that he obtained a cession of Bulkh to facilitate the intended operations against Beggee Jân. This is not probable; and if the King of the Affghans ever entered into such an engagement, he had probably no intention of fulfilling it.

Erivân. But the fact[q] is, that the Russian commander, who was himself at Georgievsk, and whose corps was scattered on the line of the Caucasus, could not have assembled his troops and reached Teflis in less than three or four weeks; and it is probable that Heraclius, deeming the presence of a Russian force no slight evil, delayed calling for aid till it was too late, in the hope that something might defer, if not prevent, the advance of Aga Mahomed.

The impression made on the mind of Catherine is fully proved by the measures she adopted. They showed that her designs went far beyond restoring her influence in Georgia, and preserving that province in future: she, no doubt, contemplated subverting the power of Aga Mahomed. But whether her ultimate design was to place his brother (who had fled to Russia and entreated her aid) upon the throne, or to render the north-western part of Persia a province of her empire, is unknown, except to those intrusted with the secrets of her council. The moment the account of the defeat and flight of Heraclius reached Petersburgh, Goodavitch was directed to advance into Georgia with eight thousand men. A Russian general had proceeded with a small corps to Derbund, and passed the winter under its walls, where he was joined in the ensuing spring by thirty-five thousand men, commanded by Valerian Zuboff. That general instantly commenced active operations. The forts of Derbund, Bâku Talish, Shâmâkee, and Gunjâh, either surrendered or acknowledged the authority of the invaders. Before winter, the Russians were masters of all the coast of the Caspian, from the mouth of the Terek to that of the Kur, or Cyrus; and they established along the banks of the latter river a line of communication with Georgia. After these successes, Zuboff with

[q] I state this on the most authentic information. Klaproth, who gives a short narrative of these events, makes no mention of the causes that delayed the Russians. He exaggerates the force of Aga Mahomed in a most extraordinary degree, asserting that he assembled two hundred thousand men.

the main army crossed the Araxes, and fixed his winter quarters on the celebrated plain of Chowâl Mogâm[r]: the whole of Aderbejan was open to his invasion; and the subjugation of it was likely to be followed by an attack on Teheran. The rear of Zuboff's army was protected by the troops in Georgia; a corps had been sent from Astracan to cover his left. The advance of this corps already occupied the Island of Lankeroon on the shores of Ghilan, and threatened with immediate attack the neighbouring ports of Resht and Enzelee.

When he heard of the progress of the Russians, Aga Mahomed appointed a chief of his own tribe governor of Meshed; and, having placed a force which he deemed adequate for its defence under his orders, proceeded towards Teheran. It was too late to commence operations that year[s]; but the army was commanded to assemble very early in spring; and every chief was summoned to collect all his adherents, "in order to punish the insolent unbelievers of Europe, who had dared to invade the territories of the faithful[t]."

Persia had not for many ages been threatened with more serious danger; but the storm vanished on the death of Catherine at the close of this year. One of the first acts of her son and successor was to recall the army under Zuboff[u], which returned without any loss in its retreat. The countries through which it marched were friendly[x]; and its

[r] For a description of this plain, see vol. ii. p. 15.

[s] He reached his capital on the 20th of September. In Aderbejan, the winter often sets in in October; and it is not unusual to have very heavy falls of snow in that month. In 1810 the whole country was covered with snow by a storm that commenced on the 20th of October.

[t] Persian MS.

[u] The hatred of the Emperor Paul for the leader of this army, who was the brother of Plato Zuboff, the favorite of the deceased empress, was probably one of his chief motives for evacuating Persia. A separate order was sent to the commandant of every regiment in this army to retreat, but not a line was addressed to the commander-in-chief.

[x] One general officer went unguarded and unmolested in his carriage

commander had observed so strict a discipline, that he left in the provinces he had invaded as strong an impression of the justice as of the power of his sovereign. The reputation of Catherine had spread to every quarter of the East. The inhabitants of Persia had heard from the merchants who travelled over Russia, the most exaggerated accounts about the wisdom of her internal administration, and the success of her foreign wars. The admiration of her conduct was increased by her sex. To a nation among whom females are only esteemed as the slaves of pleasure, it was almost an inexplicable wonder to see a woman [y] ruling a great empire with more than the genius of man. Her fame gave strength to her armies; and, if she had lived, there is every ground to suppose that she might have made a serious impression on Persia, particularly if her designs had been limited, as was professed, to placing another monarch upon the throne: but the ultimate success of this project to extend the influence, if not the power, of Russia in this quarter of Asia, must have depended more on the disposition of the inhabitants of Persia, than on the numbers or valour of the Russian army, which would have been exposed to difficulties such as nothing but the aid of a party in the country could have enabled it to overcome.

Aga Mahomed Khan always expressed great confidence in his means of repelling this attack; and his plan was undoubtedly that which was calculated, above all others, to ensure success. He told the assembled leaders of his army, that the Russians had presumed during his absence in Khorassan to invade the opposite frontier of his dominions. "But my valiant warriors," he added, "shall be led against them; and, by the blessing of God, we will charge their celebrated lines of infantry and batteries of cannon, and cut

from Derbund to Astracan. We could not have a stronger proof of the settled state of the country.

[y] Catherine the Second is known in Persia by the name of "Khoorsheed Kullah," or "the sun crowned;" which, from being used to denote the sovereign of an empire, has become the personal appellation of this empress.

them to pieces with our conquering sabres." The chiefs applauded the heroic resolution of their sovereign, and promised to support him with their lives. When they had gone, the monarch directed his minister, Hajee Ibrahim, to approach; and asked him, if he had heard what he had said. The minister said he had. "And do you think," said he, "I will do what I have told them?" "Undoubtedly, if it is your majesty's pleasure," was the reply. "Hajee," said Aga Mahomed Khan, half angry, "have I been mistaken? are you also a fool? Can a man of your wisdom believe I will ever run my head against their walls of steel, or expose my irregular army to be destroyed by their cannon and disciplined troops? I know better. Their shot shall never reach me; but they shall possess no country beyond its range. They shall not know sleep; and let them march where they choose, I will surround them with a desert [1]."

When Aga Mahomed learnt that the Russians had retreated, he determined to move towards Georgia. Heraclius had died soon after the loss of his capital. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Goorgeen Khan: this prince, on the departure of the Russian troops, dreaded the vengeance of the Persian king so much, that he had recourse to the dangerous expedient of taking into his service a large corps [2] of Leaghees, a race of mountaineers, who continually made inroads into the valleys of Georgia, and whose desire of plunder was not likely to subside, from the opportunity thus given them of indulging it.

The Persian army left Teheran early in spring. When within about sixty miles of the Araxes, Aga Mahomed received intelligence from the principal inhabitants of Sheshâh,

[1] On my first public mission to Persia in 1800, four years after this period, I lived during my stay at the capital with Hajee Ibrahim, who repeated this conversation to me.

[2] A manuscript by an intelligent native of Teflis says fifteen thousand Leaghees entered Georgia; and adds, "These friends were more to be dreaded than any enemies."

that they had endeavoured to seize their governor, Ibrahim Khan, but that he had fled to the mountains of Daghestân; and they requested the monarch to hasten and take possession of the fortress, which they were ready to deliver over to him. The moment this intelligence was received, Aga Mahomed left all his heavy baggage, and a part of his army to guard it, and proceeded with a light corps to occupy the important fortress which had so long baffled all his attempts. He found the Araxes full, but commanded his troops to cross. The boats were insufficient to carry them over; but so great was the dread of disobeying his orders, that those who could not get boats threw themselves into the river. Many were drowned, as the stream was deep and rapid; but the object was gained. The monarch entered Sheshâh before the friends of Ibrahim Khan could make an effort for its recovery: this fortunate commencement led all to expect a glorious campaign; but as the army of Aga Mahomed were indulging in anticipated victories, one of those events occurred, which, in nations subject to despotic rule, are the chief cause of the sudden and great changes they are continually afflicted with.

Three days after Aga Mahomed entered Sheshâh, a dispute occurred between Saduk, a Georgian slave, who was a personal attendant of the monarch, and another servant[b], about some money that was missing. The king was enraged at the noise they made, and directed that both should be put to death[c]. Saduk Khan Shâkâkee, a nobleman of high rank, solicited their pardon. This the king refused; but said, as it was the night of Friday, and sacred to prayer, he would not take their lives till next morning. It almost induces us to believe the reports spread at this period, that

[b] His name was Khudâdâd. He was a ferâsh, or person employed in pitching and taking care of the tents.

[c] I find in the accounts of this transaction a slight difference as to the offence committed by these servants. One MS. states, that Saduk had some days before enraged the king by spilling some water on the carpet on which he was praying.

Aga Mahomed was deranged in mind[d], when we are informed, that these attendants, whom he had sentenced to death, and who knew from his character that the sentence was irrevocable, were yet permitted to perform, during the night they had to live, their usual avocations about his person. Despair gave them courage: when the monarch was asleep, they entered his tent, accompanied by a man named Abbas, whom they had associated in their design, and with their poniards put an end to the existence of one of the ablest monarchs who ever sat on the throne of Persia. It was conjectured, that they were encouraged by Saduk Khan Shâkâkee; and subsequent events confirmed the suspicion; for this ambitious nobleman not only afforded them protection, and accepted the crown jewels which they brought him, but, having assembled his tribe, endeavoured to seat himself on the throne of Persia.

Aga Mahomed Khan was murdered in the sixty-third year of his age. He had been a ruler of great part of Persia for upwards of twenty years; but had only for a short period enjoyed undisputed sovereignty. His person was so slender, that at a distance he appeared like a youth of fourteen or fifteen. His beardless and shrivelled face resembled that of an aged and wrinkled woman; and the expression of his countenance, at no time pleasant, was horrible when clouded, as it very often was, with indignation. He was sensible of this, and could not bear that any one should look at him[e]. In the early part of his life, he had suffered the

[d] One of his ministers assured me, that his mind was at this period in a state approaching to insanity.

[e] A manuscript in my possession relates the following remarkable anecdote. Aga Mahomed Khan was subject to fits, and when attacked, used to remain insensible for one or two hours. When he was one day hunting near Kerman, he had separated from his followers. His horse got into some swampy ground; and while the animal was struggling to get free, the monarch fell into a fit. An attendant came up, and seeing his situation, extricated him with great difficulty, and watched him till he came to his senses. Aga Mahomed, on perceiving the soldier standing over him, was at first alarmed; but, on being told what had occurred, he thanked the man and

most cruel adversity; and his future conduct seems to have taken its strongest bias from the keen recollection of his misery and wrongs. His first passion was the love of power; his second, avarice; his third, revenge. In all these he indulged to excess, and they ministered to each other; but the two latter gave way to the first, whenever they came in collision. His knowledge of the character and feelings of others was wonderful; and it is to this knowledge, and his talent of concealing his secret purposes, that we must refer his extraordinary success in subduing his enemies. He never employed force until art had failed; even in war, his policy effected more than his sword. His ablest and most confidential minister, when asked if Aga Mahomed Khan was personally brave, replied, "No doubt; but I can hardly recollect an occasion where he had an opportunity of displaying courage. His head never left work for his hand [f]."

The first great effort of Aga Mahomed Khan's life was to acquire power; the second, to render it permanent in his family. Before he obtained the crown, he controlled every passion that could obstruct his rise; but when the mask was no longer necessary, he threw it aside: as policy no longer restrained his revenge and avarice, he destroyed and plundered all whom he considered in any way hostile to his government. Every chief, who from birth or character was likely to aspire to the throne, was either put to death or deprived of sight: by this politic but barbarous proceeding, he suppressed that spirit of rebellion which had so long distracted Persia. He had persuaded himself that the means

promised to reward him. He did so, but, in the man's opinion, not sufficiently; and when on duty, as one of the personal guards, he continued to look the king full in the face as often as he could. Aga Mahomed was so enraged at this, that he one day ordered the man's eyes to be put out. He afterwards appeared struck with his own ingratitude, and directed that the poor fellow should retire to his home, and enjoy double pay for life.

[f] I have given the very words of Hajee Ibrahim, when I questioned him about the personal valour of Aga Mahomed.

he took to preserve the throne, were not directed to a selfish object; and he used often to exclaim, when speaking of his successor, the present King of Persia, "I have shed all this blood, that the boy, Bâbâ Khan, may reign in peace [g]."

The dreadful scenes at the close of the life of Nâdir Shah had effaced all the favorable impressions made by the auspicious commencement of his reign; and the state in which he left the empire was every way unhappy for his successors. The moderation and humanity of Kerreem Khan were, perhaps, from the condition of Persia, among the causes of the anarchy and confusion that followed his death. The means used by Aga Mahomed to remedy the evils he found, to promote the future tranquillity of his country, and to secure the undisputed throne to his appointed successor, were completely successful; and we are reluctantly compelled to admit, that some of those acts which we contemplate with the greatest horror, principally contributed to this desirable result. To illustrate this, and to obtain a better knowledge of the causes which produced so great a change in the condition of Persia, it is necessary to say a few words on the conduct of Aga Mahomed towards every class of his subjects.

To his own family, after his power was established, he was cruel and severe in the extreme, except to his nephews [h], Fatteh Ali Khan and Hoossein Kooli Khan, to whom he acted as a parent. He had always employed the former in the administration of public affairs; and this young prince, for some years before his uncle's death, held the high station of Governor of Fars. It does not appear that the delicate relations between the monarch and his successor were ever disturbed by suspicion or alarm; and our opinion of Aga Mahomed is raised by the conduct he invariably pursued towards the person whom from the first he had destined to succeed to the throne.

[g] Persian MS.

[h] They were the sons of his full brother, Hoossein Kooli Khan.

To the religious men of his kingdom, Aga Mahomed was attentive, and sometimes generous. He appeared pious; and was not only regular in observing the forms of prayer at the stated hours, but arose at midnight, whatever had been the fatigues of the day, to perform his devotions. His mind was not free from superstition: one author, who gives some remarkable anecdotes of him, informs us, that after he had slain Jaffier Kooli Khan[i], he directed the corpse to be immediately removed from Teheran, that he might not break the solemn vow he had taken on the Koran, not to detain his brother beyond one night in the city. It is difficult to believe that the human mind can either cheat itself, or expect to impose on others, by such sacrilegious mockery.

Aga Mahomed Khan was rigid in the administration of justice. He punished corruption in the magistrates, whenever it was detected. Such as committed crimes which according to the Koran merited death, were seldom forgiven: and he never pardoned persons who in any shape disturbed the tranquillity of his dominions. The first noble in the land who aspired beyond his station, the soldier who disobeyed his orders, and the thief who plundered on the road met the same fate. His conduct to his ministers and the chief officers of his court was often harsh and abrupt, and sometimes cruel. Hajee Ibrahim was an exception. The monarch discovered at once the talents of that extraordinary man; whose plainness of manner, blunt speech, manly fortitude, and astonishing knowledge of public affairs, whether it was to manage the police of a village, to collect the revenue of a district, to conduct a negotiation, or to govern an empire, led Aga Mahomed to give him his entire confidence: during the latter years of his life, the king would hardly allow any communication, however trifling[k], to be

[i] See vol. ii. p. 186.

[k] Hajee Ibrahim told me, that one day, when part of the army was engaged with the enemy, the zumbooruks, or "camel swivels," were badly managed, and that Aga Mahomed demanded of him in a passion why this was the case? "I answered," said the Hajee, "that I really could not tell;

made to him through any other channel. No confidence was ever better rewarded. The minister, though he studied the character of his master, and gained on him by supplying his avarice, and forwarding his plans of ambition, laboured to promote the prosperity of the empire; and, from his kind disposition, was the medium of obtaining mercy to others, whenever he could interfere without danger to himself.

Even the ministers of Aga Mahomed were not exempt from the attacks, which avarice and policy led him occasionally to make on his nobles and principal officers. As a mode of levying fines, he was in the habit of selling those whom he meant to plunder; and the purchaser, that he might raise the sum required, was vested with power over every thing except the life of the person whom he bought. When the king desired to obtain a sum of money from Meerza Shuffee[1], who had been his principal minister before Hajee Ibrahim, he sold him to his rival for a specific amount. The transaction took place in public court: a servant of Hajee Ibrahim advanced, and, having ungirded the band from his waist, threw it over Meerza Shuffee, and led him to his master's house, where he was treated with kindness and attention. The Hajee endeavoured to satisfy him that he had acted from a knowledge of the monarch's character, who, he saw, was resolved to obtain the money, and might have had recourse, had he not offered it, to proceedings more harsh and disagreeable to both; and he gave a proof of his sincerity by advancing a part of the sum which

it was the fault of the commander of the corps." "That may be," said Aga Mahomed Khan; "but I shall blame no one but my prime minister, who must see that every department is in proper order." "This was very unreasonable," added the Hajee, smiling; "for he knew I never pretended to be a soldier."

[1] It is stated in one of the manuscripts which notices this transaction, that the minister owed a balance to the monarch; and another asserts that Aga Mahomed first offered to sell Hajee Ibrahim to Meerza Shuffee; but the latter dreaded the influence of his rival too much to venture on the purchase.

Meerza Shuffee was unable to raise. When the amount was paid, the minister was released, and returned as usual to his duties[m]. However generously Hâjee Ibrahim behaved, we are not to conclude that he was insensible to the strength he obtained from this public disgrace of a rival who was one of the oldest and most favorite servants of Aga Mahomed; and this occurrence added greatly to the animosity with which these ministers had long regarded each other.

It had always been the policy of Aga Mahomed Khan to promote union in the tribe of the Kajirs. He had seen the Zend family destroy itself: warned by their example, he wisely endeavoured to secure a happier fate for the dynasty which he founded. Flatterers have imputed his conduct towards his brothers to his anxiety for this object. He knew, they say, that nothing was likely to disturb that harmony which gave strength to his tribe, except contests between the members of his own family for the throne. To the chiefs of other tribes whom he did not suspect of ambitious designs, he was neither ungracious nor unjust; but he compelled them to keep part of their family at Teheran. By this precaution, and by employing their followers in opposite quarters of the kingdom, and sometimes removing them from one province to another, he studied to deprive them of the means of disturbing his government, or that of his successor.

The good sense of Aga Mahomed led him to alter some of the lesser forms of his court: he would seldom allow the inhabitants of his capital to come out to meet him, when he returned from an expedition; and he disdained to circulate,

[m] In all the arbitrary governments of the East, the disgrace and punishment of a minister are deemed no obstacles to his immediate resumption of his office. When I was at the court of Doulut Row Scindiah in 1804, one of his ministers, Annâ Sic-novees, was kept under a vertical sun without a turban for several hours, till he agreed to pay three lacks of rupees, (37,500 pounds sterling,) that had been demanded of him. The day after I was surprised not only to see him restored to his office, but employed in a negotiation of importance.

(as was the usage,) on every trifling advantage that his arms obtained, exaggerated accounts of his success. In all written communications to the officers of government, it had been customary to use the most hyperbolical style. Aga Mahomed insisted that the substance of his commands should be given in plain language. The eloquent meerzas, or secretaries of his court, unwillingly adopted a change which struck at the root of all their excellence in composition; but when they commenced their flowery introductions, it was not unusual for the impatient monarch to desire "that they would pass over the nonsense, and proceed to the subject of the letter at once[n]." But though he despised useless forms, no sovereign was ever more sensible of the necessity of enforcing such as were in any way essential to support the royal dignity. His minister, Hajee Ibrahim, used to recount a remarkable anecdote on this point. Two persons of indifferent character, but possessed of wealth, desired to farm a district, and had made an offer far exceeding any other which had been received. The minister, knowing his master's avarice, thought that this proposition would afford him great delight, and desired the men who had made it to attend him to the king. As he advanced, Aga Mahomed Khan exclaimed in a loud voice, "Who are you bringing with you?"—"Two persons," said the Hajee, repeating their names, "who wish to farm a district, and have offered most advantageous terms."—"I cannot see them," said the monarch.—"But, please your majesty," replied Hajee Ibrahim, "they will give nearly double what any other person offers, with the best security for payment."—"No matter," said Aga Mahomed, "the money must be given up; men like these cannot be admitted to my presence[o]." The royal name had been so degraded in Persia, that it required all the efforts of Aga Mahomed to restore the attributes in which absolute

[n] Persian MS.

[o] The Hajee related this anecdote to me, as a proof that even avarice, strong as it was in Aga Mahomed Khan, was always under subjection to his policy.

power must be clothed, in order that it may be efficient. The consequence he attached to every act or speech that could tend to degrade the name of king, was shown on a remarkable occasion, when he punished by a most inhuman beating and by confiscating the greatest part of his property, the principal lord in waiting, for having exclaimed, when he presented an envoy from Timoor Shah, "that an ambassador from the king of the Affghans was come to the earth at the feet of the slaves of his exalted majesty." He is said to have been in such a rage, that he could hardly be induced to spare the life of this officer, who was of high rank and belonged to the tribe of Kajir. "Did you hear what the villain uttered?" exclaimed the monarch to those who interceded for him; "that an ambassador from one he styled king was come to the earth at the feet of my slaves! How dared he use the sacred name of majesty, to expose it to such degradation! But he has suffered, and my character is retrieved[p]!" The nobleman meant to flatter his own monarch. Perhaps the policy of Aga Mahomed, while he pretended to vindicate the name of king, took this mode of repairing an insult which his servant had cast on a powerful sovereign.

Aga Mahomed Khan treated his soldiers with more liberality and indulgence than any other class of his subjects. The issue of their pay and provisions was generally regular; and though he enforced the strictest obedience, and allowed none to plunder except when he authorized them, that permission was frequently granted; and what they obtained amid violence and rapine, became their legal property. Several women and children of the first families of Kerman were brought away by the troops when that city was sacked. Soon after, some of the principal inhabitants were encouraged, by the promised intercession of one of the most revered Persian priests, to go to the capital and solicit the restoration of their wives and children. The pontiff, Shaikh

[p] Persian MS.

Mahomed Lâhsâee, presented their petition, and enforced its prayer with all his eloquence. He was held in high veneration by Aga Mahomed; and a request from him was hardly ever refused: but though he had the boldness to repeat his entreaties, the monarch was not to be moved; and at last he said with some sternness, "I cannot grant your wish. I will never irritate my soldiers by desiring them to restore what they took under my sanction. I have no objection, however, to the inhabitants of Kerman ransoming their wives and children; nor to those in whose possession they are, restoring them if they choose; but I desire you to urge me no more on this subject, as I am resolved not to use compulsion." The great body of his army were naturally attached to a leader who treated them with such consideration. They knew that, if they yielded a prompt obedience to his orders, they had nothing to apprehend from others; for the meanest soldier could always complain to Aga Mahomed, who might be said to live with his troops. When not employed in the field against his enemies, he was constantly engaged in hunting excursions, to which he proceeded with a greater number of attendants, not merely with the view of enjoying a favorite amusement, but to inure himself and his followers to continual action.

Unless on occasions of ceremony, Aga Mahomed Khan was dressed in the plainest manner. His contempt of luxury was shown on all occasions; and his policy made him seize every opportunity of giving his leaders and troops a pride in those hardships and privations to which their profession doomed them. After a march, or when fatigued with hunting, he would seat himself on the ground, and share with his officers in any repast that was brought. It happened one day, as he was eating some of the hard black bread and sour milk, which form the common fare of the Persian soldier, that one of his principal ministers, who was seated near him, began to eat of the same food. The monarch instantly commanded him to desist. "Eat as much as you like of your rich pillaws and fine sweetmeats," said he;

"but never again let me see a fellow of a secretary [q], like you, touch the food of my soldiers." The minister, with an inward smile, heard himself condemned to eat none but good and delicate viands, while the military chiefs and soldiers that sat around felt it as a distinction to live on a coarse diet which their sovereign shared, and from the very taste of which he had just debarred one of the first civil officers in the realm.

The merchants in Persia were efficiently protected by Aga Mahomed; during the latter years of his reign, commerce revived in every quarter. This was not more the consequence of his justice, than of the general security which his rule inspired; and of the extinction, through the severity of his punishments, of those bands of robbers with which the country had before been infested. To the farmers and cultivators he gave no further protection than what they derived from the terror of his name; but that was considerable: from the collector of a district to the governor of a province, all dreaded a complaint made to a monarch, by whom the slightest deviations in those who exercised power, were often visited by the most dreadful punishment.

Aga Mahomed had probably experienced great distress from the want of money; and, in a government where credit is unknown, a full treasury is essential to the support of regal power. From the habit of amassing riches, he became at last avaricious in a degree hardly to be believed. We are informed by one writer, that having overheard a poor man, whose ears he had ordered to be cut off for some trivial offence, offer a few pieces of silver to the executioner if he would take off only a part of them, the king called to the man, and told him, that if he would give him double the amount he had just offered to his servant, his ears should

[q] This anecdote was first told me by Hajee Ibrahim, and I find it mentioned in a manuscript Life of Aga Mahomed Khan. The term secretary has been used to translate the Persian meerza, which implies a man whose occupation is to write, and whose habits of life are civil.

not be touched[r]. The peasant threw himself on the ground to return thanks, and was going away, deeming the demand for money a mere pleasantry; but he was recalled, and soon convinced that his pardon depended on his instantly satisfying the mean avarice of the monarch. From another account we learn, that Aga Mahomed actually combined with an artful religious mendicant to obtain money from his courtiers. The man met him at a place appointed, when surrounded by officers of state. Apparently struck by his appearance and story, the king ordered a large amount to be given to him, and recommended the holy man to equal attention from others. The example of the sovereign was followed by the whole court; and the mendicant received a considerable sum. It was late at night before the impatience of Aga Mahomed revealed the secret. "I have been cheated!" he exclaimed to his minister; "that scoundrel of a mendicant, whom you saw this morning, not only promised to return what I gave him, but to give me half of what he received from others!" Horsemen were sent in every direction; but the wily fellow evaded all pursuit; and the courtiers secretly rejoiced in the disappointment of their monarch's cupidity.

Many similar anecdotes are told of Aga Mahomed Khan. It is probable that they are exaggerated; but their circulation and credit prove that avarice was indulged to a very great extent by this extraordinary man, whose rule, chequered as his character was by great and mean qualities, restored tranquillity to a distracted kingdom, and fixed his family on a splendid throne.

On the death of Aga Mahomed Khan, his army was thrown into the greatest confusion. Sheshâh was abandoned; and the corpse of the monarch was left to be insulted by the lowest of his enemies. Saduk Khan Shâkâkee marched away with his tribe, and some other chiefs followed his example; but, after the first confusion was over, Hajee

[r] Persian MS.

Ibrahim proclaimed his allegiance to the declared heir; and, having reassembled a considerable body of troops, advanced towards the capital, the gates of which were shut on all by Meerza Mahomed Khan[s], till the arrival from Shiraz of Fatteh Ali Khan, the nephew and appointed successor of the deceased sovereign. That prince, though instantly proclaimed king, was not publicly crowned till the beginning of the next year. It is not the intention to write the history of the reigning monarch of Persia: it will be sufficient to notice in a cursory manner the principal events which have taken place since he came to the throne.

Saduk Khan made a weak effort to oppose him, but was attacked and defeated. This example of rebellion was afterwards followed by the king's brother[t], and a prince[u] of the Zend family; but these attempts were subdued without an action, and the internal tranquillity of the empire has never since been disturbed.

Fatteh Ali Khan, in a series of campaigns, has established his power over the greatest part of Khorassan; and the chiefs[x] whom he has not actually subdued, yield a nominal obedience, and send an occasional tribute to propitiate his favour and protection. The Affghans have for some years

[s] This respectable chief is of the Kajir tribe, but of the opposite branch to the reigning family. He had been at one period very hostile to Aga Mahomed; but was forgiven and employed in the highest stations. His conduct on this occasion, and on every other, evinced his gratitude and attachment.

[t] Hoossein Kooli Khan.

[u] The name of this prince was Mahomed Khan; he was the son of Zuckee Khan, and had for some time been residing at Bussorah. He advanced to Isfahan with only twenty or thirty attendants; but they were enough to alarm its inhabitants into submission. Mahomed Khan only kept possession of the city one or two days; his followers dispersed, and he was obliged to fly. He was successful in reaching the Turkish territories.

[x] Isaak Khan, the ruler of Turbut-e-Hyderee, whose history has been given, may be deemed at this moment by far the most powerful of the chiefs of Khorassan. He has been induced by the distinction with which he has been treated by Aga Mahomed and the present monarch, to aid in establishing the rule of the Kajir monarchs over that province.

past been in too distracted a state from their internal divisions, to support those rights which their monarchs pretend to inherit from Ahmed Shah on this province; and its peace is not now annually disturbed by the invasions of the Oosbegs, over whom Beggee Jân no longer reigns. He died soon after Aga Mahomed; and his son, Hyder Turrah, who succeeded to the sovereignty, has performed no deeds yet which can lead to a belief that he either inherits the talents or the power of his extraordinary parent and predecessor.

The Persian monarch has not been so successful in maintaining his north-western frontier. After a warfare continued with various fortune for many years, Georgia has at last become a province of Russia; and the garrisons of that nation now extend to the Araxes, and along the southern shores of the Caspian.

The court of Persia, within the last fifteen years, has been again visited by the ambassadors of European nations. The power possessed by its sovereign of checking the Affghans, who threatened to invade India, and of repelling the ambitious views of France, if ever directed to that quarter, led the Governor-General of the British possessions in the East, to form an alliance with Fatteh Ali Khan, immediately after he was raised to the throne. This policy had the temporary success which was desired, of diverting the Affghans from their meditated invasion of India; and an impression was made of the power of the English nation, both on the King of Persia and his subjects, favorable to the performance of the engagements into which he had entered, to oppose, if ever required by circumstances to do so, the European enemies of Great Britain [y]. This alliance

[y] Monsieur Langlès, in his Notice Chronologique, at the end of his excellent edition of Chardin's Travels, observes, "that though Captain Malcolm and his suite are still praised by the Persians, on account of the great sums they expended on their route from Abusheher to Teheran, *their propositions, which were ridiculous, and even injurious, were rejected with indignation by the king and his ministers!*"—*Voyages de* CHARDIN, vol. x. p. 232.

I can only remark on this last sentence, that it is exactly opposite to the

was attended with the further advantage of promoting the intercourse and increasing the commerce between India and Persia.

The ambition of Buonaparte gave eager attention to every plan, offering the most distant prospect of augmenting his means of injuring the principal power that impeded his progress to universal dominion: and however visionary his plans may appear to those acquainted with the vast difficulties he had to encounter, he certainly cherished the project of invading the British dominions in India. The friendship of the King of Persia was courted, as necessary before he could make this attempt; and the nature of the relations between France and Russia at this period afforded him every advantage. The Court of London took considerable alarm at these proceedings: and the efforts deemed necessary to counteract them have led to a more direct intercourse with the Government of Persia, which, within the space of five years, has been honored with two embassies from the King of England.

The King of Persia had listened to the overture of Buonaparte, in the hope that his mediation or his power would enable him to recover Georgia: but when changes in the condition of Europe compelled the French Emperor to abandon his designs on Asia, he reverted to his alliance with the English; who, from the situation of their Indian territories, were possessed of means, which he saw them prepared to use, either to aid or attack him, as he determined to oppose or support their European enemies. It is not necessary to enter into any detail of the negotiations between the English government and that of Persia; or to say more, than that relations of general amity subsist be-

truth. Every object desired by the Indian government, when it sent a mission to Persia in 1800, was obtained; and that mission received from the king, his ministers, and all others with whom it had any intercourse, uniform kindness and attention. The learned orientalist, who has made this incorrect statement, will, I am assured, satisfy himself, on further inquiry, that he has incautiously given his name to an error of some magnitude.

tween the two countries, and have been confirmed by treaties. The object of the British nation must invariably be the same. It can only desire the strength and prosperity of a kingdom, which interposes a barrier between Europe and its Asiatic dominions. Fortunately Persia is at present happier and more tranquil than it has been for a long period; and its reigning monarch, who has already (1814) occupied the throne seventeen years, by the comparative mildness and justness of his rule has already entitled himself to a high rank among the Kings of Persia.

Chapter XX.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGION OF THE PERSIANS.

The history of a nation would be incomplete without some account of its religious belief. Whatever shape it assumes, religion has always exercised a supreme power over the human mind; but its effects are most remarkable when it influences the fate of nations. The feelings it inspires in the breasts of individuals, gather strength as they spread. The attachment entertained for peculiar dogmas is heightened by the force of example and the desire of pre-eminence: and a creed adopted by a large community becomes the strongest tie by which a people can be united. But this vehement passion of the soul, which ought, from its heavenly nature, to be the bond of peace, has too frequently been used by designing and ambitious men as a torch to kindle the flames of war. Religion has been marshalled against religion; schism against schism; kingdoms have become powerful, not from the patriotism of the inhabitants, or their love to each other, but from an irreconcilcable hatred to their neighbours, on account of some slight difference in

the form or substance of their paying their adoration to the Creator of the universe.

These observations, which unfortunately describe the general condition of human society, apply with peculiar force to those nations which have adopted the belief of the Arabian Prophet: he expressly commanded his followers "to strike off the heads of unbelievers;" and told them, that, "though God had the power to avenge himself of his enemies, he had chosen them to fight [1] his battles [2]." Though some of the commentators have tried to limit this passage to a particular war in which Mahomed was engaged when it was written, all agree that, according to the principles of the religion and the example of its first teacher, the sword is a legitimate and hallowed instrument of conversion.

In describing the religion of the Persians, it is not intended to dwell on the forms of the Mahomedan faith, nor to enter into any minute details on the tenets of the leading or subordinate sects. The object is, by a general account of their religious belief, to illustrate their past history, and to enable the reader to judge of the future events that may be expected from causes connected with this powerful motive of human action.

After a short view of the Mahomedan faith, it will be necessary to describe the tenets of the Sheah sect, which, from the establishment of the Seffavean dynasty, may be termed the national religion of Persia. The doctrines, or rather principles, of the Soofees, or philosophical devotees, which have lately spread very widely in Persia, will also merit a portion of our attention.

[1] Mahomed did not propagate the doctrine of the legality of force till the thirteenth year of his mission. He declares in several of the chapters published at Mecca, that he had no right to use any other means than admonition for propagating his faith. The law laid down on the slaughter of infidels in the forty-seventh chapter is believed by the sect of Haneefa to relate particularly to the war of Bedr, in which he was then engaged: but this interpretation is not general among Mahomedans.

[2] Sale's Koran, vol. ii. p. 364.

The precepts of the religion of Mahomed are contained in the Koran. The principal doctrine which he taught was the unity of God; and he proclaimed that the chief object of his mission was to bring men back to the belief of that great and important tenet. There never was, he contended, nor ever could be, but one orthodox religion; and though its laws and ceremonies were temporary and subject to alteration, the substance, being eternal truth, must be immutable. He taught that, whenever this religion became corrupted, God in his goodness had sent apostles and prophets to recal mankind to the true path. Of these there had been several; but the principal before him were Moses and Jesus [b]. He declared himself the seal of the prophets; and that none would come after him.

The doctrine [c] of Mahomed is divided by his followers into two distinct parts: the first is termed faith; the second religion, or practice. The former consists in a belief of the creed; that there is no God but one, and that Mahomed is his prophet: and the profession of this implies a belief in God, his angels, his scriptures, his prophets, in the resurrection, in the day of judgment, and in God's absolute decree and predetermination of good and evil. The duties of religion or practice are prayer according to the prescribed forms, alms, fastings, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Nothing can be more exalted than the opinion which the followers of Mahomed are taught to entertain of the Almighty. Their religion may be termed pure Deism; for

[b] Jesus is made to exclaim, in the sixty-first chapter of the Koran, "O children of Israel! verily I am the apostle of God sent unto you, confirming the law which was delivered before me, and bringing good tidings of an apostle who shall come after me, and whose name shall be Ahmed." Ahmed is derived from the same root as Mahomed, and was one of the prophet's names. This prophecy is founded on a paraphrastical translation of the sixteenth chapter of John in the New Testament, in which the Paraclete is promised. This, it is contended by Mahomedans, should be read Periclete, or "the illustrious;" a word of the same signification as Ahmed.

[c] The doctrine is termed Islâm. Faith is termed Imân; and Religion, in its practical sense, Deen.

the mind is every where directed to one God, as the only object of worship; and that adoration, which is his due, cannot, according to their fundamental principle, be shared by any other object; because all else, whether animate or inanimate, is created, and cannot therefore be elevated to the same rank with its Creator. The Mahomedan is taught by the Koran to believe in the existence and purity of angels. They consider them to be beings created of fire, which neither eat, drink, nor propagate their species. These angels are continually employed in different occupations: some are hymning the praises of their Maker; some are recording the actions of men; while others intercede with God to pardon the sins of the human race. The angel Gabriel, who is believed to have brought the Koran from heaven, is termed the holy spirit; and the angel of revelations, Michael, is deemed the friend and protector of the Jews; Azrael is the angel of death; and Israfeel is appointed to sound the trumpet at the day of resurrection [d].

The Mahomedan faith also teaches, that the devil was once an angel, but was banished from heaven because he refused to pay homage to Adam when God commanded him. They also believe in the existence of a number of good and evil spirits called jin, or genii, who are made of fire, but of a grosser mould than angels, as they eat and drink, propagate their species, and are subject to death, and liable, like men, to future reward and punishment [e].

The doctrine of the angels, and of the jin, or genii, is taken from the Jews and ancient Persians; and was probably introduced to flatter the belief and meet the prejudices of those whom he sought as converts.

With regard to the belief of Scripture, Mahomed taught that God had, in various ages of the world, sent these sacred books [f] by his prophets. An immense number of pro-

[d] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, vol. i. p. 94. [e] Ibid. p. 96.

[f] The number of these sacred volumes were one hundred and four: "of which, ten were given to Adam, fifty to Seth, thirty to Edris, or Enoch, ten

phets[g] have, from time to time, been sent to instruct mankind; but of this army of heavenly missionaries, only three hundred and thirteen were appointed apostles to reclaim men from their errors and infidelity; and six alone of the latter number brought laws and revelations, which were ordained to abrogate what had been before established: these were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mahomed.

The Mahomedans believe in the resurrection and the day of judgment; they affirm that, when the corpse is laid in the grave, a heavenly spirit gives it notice of the approach of the two examining angels, who, the moment they come, demand of the deceased, whether he believed in the unity of God and the mission of Mahomed? If he answers properly, the body is suffered to rest in peace, and is refreshed by the air of paradise; if not, his torture[h] commences, and con-

to Abraham; and the other four, being the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Koran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus, and Mahomed; which last being the seal of the prophets, those revelations are now closed, and no more are to be expected. All these divine books, except the four last, they agree to be now entirely lost, and their contents unknown, though the Sabians have several books which they attribute to some of the antediluvian prophets; and of those four, the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospel, they say, have undergone so many alterations and corruptions, that, though there may possibly be some part of the true word of God therein, yet no credit is to be given to the present copies in the hands of the Jews and Christians."—SALE's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 97.

The learned author, from whom the above is quoted, says, (p. 98,) that "the Mahomedans have a Gospel in Arabic attributed to St. Barnabas, wherein the history of Jesus Christ is related in a manner very different from what we find in the true Gospel, and correspondent to those traditions which Mahomed has followed in his Koran." I made every inquiry for this Gospel when in Persia, but never could find it. I do not believe the inhabitants possess it, or the Pentateuch, complete.

[g] Their numbers, according to one tradition, are two hundred and twenty-four thousand: another author states them at only one hundred and twenty-four thousand.

[h] "When a corpse is laid in the grave, they say he is received by an angel, who gives him notice of the coming of the two examiners; which are two black livid angels, of a terrible appearance, named Monker and Nakir. These order the dead person to sit upright, and examine him concerning his faith, as to the unity of God, and the mission of Mahomed: if he answer rightly, they suffer the body to rest in peace, and it is refreshed by

tinues till he receives his final doom at the day of judgment.

The soul is separated from the body by the angel of death; but the souls of prophets only are at once admitted into paradise; those of all others remain in an intermediate state of bliss or misery, according to their merits [i].

The period of the resurrection is known to God only. Mahomed has informed his followers, that even the angel Gabriel, when he interrogated him, confessed his ignorance on that point. It will be preceded by many terrible signs [k]; but even these will leave the hour uncertain. "On the day of resurrection," (to use the words of Mahomed,) "the whole earth shall be but a handful to the Almighty; and the heavens shall be rolled together in his right hand. The trumpet shall be sounded; and whoever are in heaven, and whoever are on earth, shall expire. It shall sound again, and all shall arise and look up." Then, according to the text [l] of the Koran, God will proceed to judgment; and

the air of paradise; but if not, they beat him on the temples with iron maces till he roars out for anguish so loud, that he is heard by all from East to West, except men and genii. They then press the earth on the corpse, which is gnawed and stung till the resurrection by ninety-nine dragons, with seven heads each; or, as others say, their sins will become venomous beasts, the grievous ones stinging like dragons, the smaller like scorpions, and the others like serpents; circumstances which some understand in a figurative sense."—SALE's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 100.

[i] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, vol. i. p. 104.

[k] These signs are described at length by Pocock, and in Sale's Preliminary Discourse. They include the rising of the sun in the West; the appearance of a smoke which shall fill the earth; the eruption of Gog and Magog; the speaking of beasts and birds, &c.

[l] In the text of the Koran, two sounds of the trumpet are alone mentioned; but the orthodox Mahomedans, on the ground of traditions, believe there will be three. The first is called the blast of consternation, from the horror it will strike into all that exist. The second they call the blast of examination, at the sound of which all that live will die, even the angel of death himself. The third and last sound is termed the blast of resurrection, at which all will revive. The last will be sounded forty years after the second by the angel Israfeel, who, with Gabriel and Michael, shall be restored to life, and stand upon the rock of the Temple of Jerusalem. For a full

every soul will be rewarded according to that which it has wrought. Unbelievers will be sent to hell, to dwell there for ever; and the faithful[m] will be admitted into paradise.

The pains of hell are described at great length in the Koran and the traditions. Mahomed appears to have desired to terrify his followers by pictures of the most horrid suffering. There are degrees of torture ordained for every description of guilt; but the slightest punishment awarded to a sinner, is to have his feet shod with shoes of fire, "the fervor of which will cause his skull to boil like a cauldron[n];" but infidels alone are to suffer these pains for ever. Those who have professed the religion of Mahomed, after a period of expiation, are to be released from hell, and admitted into paradise. A narrow bridge, Ool-Aruf[o], divides the mansion of pain and suffering from that of joy and eternal bliss. The bridge itself forms a part on which those will remain whose good and bad deeds are equally balanced. Another bridge called Ool-Serat passes over the centre of hell, and is finer than a hair, and sharper than a sword; over it all mankind must pass: the virtuous and good will proceed with ease and with the swiftness of lightning; but the wicked, in attempting to follow them, will fall into the bottomless pit.

Taking the form of the heavens from the system of Ptolemy[p], Mahomed places his paradise in the seventh

account of the mode in which the resurrection of the body is effected, see Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 110.

[m] God, it is said, will come in clouds, attended by his angels, to judge mankind, for whom Mahomed will become intercessor after that office has been refused by Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Jesus; who shall beg deliverance only for their own souls.—Sale's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 115.

[n] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 122.

[o] Ool-Aruf may be translated "the partition," as it is derived from the Arabic verb a rafa, "to part."

[p] The writings of this celebrated astronomer, who is conjectured to have been born about the year seventy of the Christian era, were translated into Arabic; and this work, the Almagestum, has continued for seventeen centuries to be deemed the true system of the heavenly bodies by the greatest part of the Asiatic world.

heaven. At its entrance is a delicious fountain[q], one cup of the waters of which would allay thirst for ever. The soil is said to be musk and saffron; its stones, pearls and jacinths; the walls of its palaces are enriched with gold and silver; and the trunks of all its trees are of gold. Among these the chief is called Tuba, or "the tree of happiness," which stands in the palace of Mahomed; and a branch, bearing delicious fruit[r], reaches to the dwelling of every believer. From the root of this extraordinary tree, the shade of which extends further than the swiftest horse could gallop in a hundred years, flow rivers[s] of milk, of wine, and of honey; and the bowers of paradise are refreshed[t] by numberless streams and fountains, with pebbles of rubies and emeralds, beds of camphire and musk, and banks of saffron. But all these glories are eclipsed by the beautiful houries, the enjoyment of whose charms is the great reward promised to the faithful. Their prophet assured them, that they should repose on couches covered with silk interwoven with gold, and be surrounded with fruit gardens, refreshed with pure streams and inhabited by beauteous black-eyed damsels, whose complexions are like rubies and pearls, and whose eyes shall never wander to any but their

[q] This fountain is called "the pond of Mahomed," and is a month's journey in compass.—SALE's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 126.

[r] This tree is laden with pomegranates, grapes, dates, and other fruits of surprising bigness, and of tastes unknown to mortals. If a man desire to eat of any particular fruit, it will immediately be presented to him. If he prefer flesh, roasted birds will appear on its branches, and its boughs will bend to meet his extended hand. This tree will also furnish the faithful with fine horses richly accoutred to ride upon, which will burst forth from its fruit.—SALE's *Preliminary Discourse*, vol. i. p. 127.

[s] The most celebrated of these was Kooser, or "the stream of life;" from the waters of which the fountain of Mahomed at the entrance of paradise was filled.

[t] "Therein are rivers of incorruptible water; and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not; and rivers of wine, pleasant unto those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey: and therein shall they have plenty of all kinds of fruits; and pardon from the Lord."—*Koran*, vol. ii. chap. xlvii. p. 365.

husbands[u]. "They who approach near to God," the prophet adds, "shall dwell in gardens of delight; reposing on couches adorned with gold and precious stones; sitting opposite to one another thereon. Youths, who shall continue in their bloom for ever, shall go round about to attend them, with goblets, and beakers, and a cup of flowing wine; their heads shall not ache by drinking the same, neither shall their reason be disturbed; and with fruits of the sorts which they shall choose, and the flesh of birds of the kind which they shall desire. And there shall accompany them fair damsels, having large black eyes, resembling pearls hidden in their shells, as a reward for that which they shall have wrought. They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, or any charge of sin; but only the salutation, Peace! peace[x]!"

The meanest among the faithful will have seventy-two houries of paradise, besides the wives[y] which he had in this world. He will inhabit a tent of precious stones, and live on the most delicious viands. His garments and furniture will be proportioned to the magnificence of his condition; to enable him to enjoy all these blessings, he will possess eternal youth; all his desires will be granted the moment they are formed; and, that no sense may be ungratified, his ears will be delighted by the voice of angels, and the songs of the daughters of paradise. Even the trees will celebrate the divine praises, with a harmony far exceeding "what man hath ever heard."

This is only a picture of the delights which await the lowest among the blessed: for the reward of purer faith and higher virtue, the Prophet, copying the very expression of Scripture, has promised enjoyments, "which the

[u] Koran, chap. lv. vol. ii. p. 399.

[x] Koran, chap. lvi. Sale's Translation, vol. ii. p. 401.

[y] It is a vulgar mistake to suppose that Mahomed denied females to have souls, or excluded them from paradise: he has, however, given them no higher rank in the regions of bliss than in this world. They are still only esteemed as they contribute to the pleasure of men.

eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive[z]."

The paradise of Mahomed was not an invention of his own: he borrowed much of it from the Jews, the Persians[a], and the Hindus; and some from the Christians. The Jews had planted the mansion of the blessed in the seventh heaven, and had furnished it with beautiful gardens. The magi had peopled it with the Hoorâni Behesht, or the houries of paradise, who are the black-eyed virgins of the Koran. The wonders of the Hindu abode of bliss appear almost literally copied. Its celestial gunga or sacred stream; its Apsâras, or heavenly nymphs; its tarucalpa, or tree of desire, dispensing delicious fruits, exquisite viands, and rich vestments; all find their place in the paradise of the prophet. The mansion prepared for the good is metaphorically described in the Christian volumes, as a glorious and magnificent city, built of gold and precious stones, with twelve gates; through the streets of which run the water of life, that flows past the tree of life, which bears various fruits, and has leaves of a healing virtue[b]. Jesus also had said that the blessed should eat and drink at his table[c]: but when Mahomed borrowed from this description of future felicity, he rejected the doctrine, that the inhabitants of this world, in the resurrection, "neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven[d]." A sensual paradise, in which man is to derive his chief felicity from continuing to indulge the passions of his present nature, is a fundamental principle of the religion. Numerous passages in the Koran place this beyond doubt; and

[z] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 132.

[a] The Hoorâni Behesht, or "black-eyed nymphs" of paradise, are mentioned in the Saddir; and Hyde, in his Treatise on the ancient religion of Persia, page 265, states, that the charge of them was committed to the angel Zamyad.

[b] Revelations, chap. xxi. xxii.

[c] Luke, chap. xxii. verse 30.

[d] St. Matthew, chap. xxii. verse 30.

though some of his followers have revolted at so gross a doctrine, the orthodox continue to believe in its literal sense all their prophet has said about the future state of reward and punishment.

The Mahomedans believe that the whole brute creation will be assembled at the resurrection, and that after the weak have been allowed to take vengeance on the strong, for the injuries they have received from them, they will be reduced to dust. The genii will be judged, like men, according to their actions. The bad will be condemned to the infernal regions, and the good will have a delightful dwelling on the verge of paradise[e].

Predestination is inculcated in the Koran, in which God is declared to have said, " The fate of every man have we bound about his neck[f]." This verse has given rise to numerous disputes. It has been contended, that its literal sense would be at variance with the justice of the Creator; and the most orthodox have concurred, that it only applies to man in his spiritual state[g]. Notwithstanding, the belief of this doctrine is general over all Mahomedan nations, and its effects are very visible. Blind fatality renders men alike insensible to the beauty of virtue, or the deformity of vice. They meet the vicissitudes of fortune with patience and resignation, because they deemed them pre-ordained and unavoidable. They are courageous in battle, from the same motive; and this doctrine was probably first taught by the warlike prophet, with a view of producing that effect on his followers.

Among the points of form or observance, the first is prayer, which is denominated " the pillar of faith." This duty is often inculcated in the Koran[h]. " Glorify God when the evening overtaketh you, and when ye rise in the morning: and unto him be praise in heaven and earth; and

[e] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 114.
[f] Sale's Koran, chap. xvii.
[g] D'Ohsson's Ottoman Empire, vol. vii. p. 121.
[h] Sale's Koran, chap. xxx.

at sunset, and when ye rest at noon[i]." This, in its literal acceptation, appears only to command four times of daily prayer: but a slight difference in the signification of the words has led the expounders of the sacred law to decide that five were meant; and every true believer is summoned by the public criers to pay his devotions five times a day, with his face turned towards the Temple of Mecca. Ablutions, which are enjoined on almost all occasions, are peculiarly necessary at the moment of prayer; the purity of body is essential, as an emblem of that purity of mind with which man ought to address his Creator. Rich clothes and ornaments are to be laid aside: these trappings of earthly vanity and power inspire a pride inconsistent with that humility with which a supplicant should address the Almighty. Women are not allowed to join in the public prayers at the mosques. They are to offer up their devotions at home; or, if they attend the place of public worship, it must be when the male sex are not there. This practice is founded on the traditionary sayings of the prophet, and confirms that inferiority and seclusion to which the female sex are doomed[k].

In the usage and form of prayer, Mahomed copied the Jews, even to the position of the body: but though he regarded Jerusalem as a sacred city, he taught his followers that a superior sanctity belonged to the Temple of Mecca; towards which he directed them to turn when they offered up their supplications to God. In this reverence to Mecca,

[i] The appointed times of prayer are:—1st, in the morning before sunrise; 2d, when noon is past; 3d, in the afternoon, before sunset; 4th, in the evening, after sunset, but while day remains; 5th, when day is closed, but before the first watch of night.

Sale, (vol. ii. p. 245,) in a note on the translation of this part of the text, makes the following remark: "Some are of opinion, that the five times of prayer are intended in this passage. The evening, including the time both of the prayer of sunset and of the evening prayer properly so called; and the word I have rendered at sunset, marking the hour of afternoon prayer, since it may be applied also to the time a little before sunset."

[k] Sale observes, on the authority of a Mahomedan doctor of eminence, that the moslems thought the presence of females inspired a different kind of devotion from that required in the worship of God.

Mahomed accommodated his doctrine to local prejudices, and to the superstition of the Arabians: they had long paid their devotions at the temple in that city, which became hallowed in the eyes of the Mahomedan world, from being the birth-place of their prophet.

Charity is imposed by his religion on every Mahomedan. There are two descriptions of alms: the one obligatory, the other voluntary. What can be legally demanded amounts to two and a-half per cent.[l] on the principal of the estate; but it can only be claimed from those who have a certain sum, and who have been in possession of the property subject to it upwards of eleven months. This legal alms, which is termed zukat, which was rigorously exacted by the prophet; who employed it in relieving the poor, and in maintaining[m] those who served him in his wars. When the religion spread, this tax was found to be not only difficult to collect, but unequal and invidious. It has in consequence been generally abandoned. Men are left to their consciences; but the obligation of charity is so strongly enforced, that few strict Mahomedans evade this sacred duty; which is recommended not only in the Koran and traditions, but by all the writers on their law, as one of the most certain means of obtaining respect on earth and eternal happiness in heaven: "Prayer," says one of the caliphs[n], "carries us half way to God; fasting brings us to the door of his palace; and alms procures us admission[o]."

The Mahomedans are enjoined fasting as a sacred duty. They are taught that in the month of Ramazan God sent

[l] The zukat, or legal alms, is one in forty, or two and a-half per cent. It is commanded to be paid on cattle, sheep, money, corn, fruits, and on all wares that are sold. There are many different opinions among Mahomedan doctors about the proportion and mode in which it should be collected on property of various kinds.

[m] The khums, or a fifth part of the spoil of infidels, which was always set aside for the use of Mahomed, formed with the zukat the whole of his revenue, and that of his immediate successors.

[n] Omar Ebn Abdool Azeez.

[o] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 146.

the Koran from heaven; during that month, every true believer must refrain from day-break till sunset, from eating, drinking, and all sensual gratifications. None are exempt, but travellers, sick persons, women with child, or those who are giving suck; and even these are required to make amends for their involuntary neglect, by fasting at some other period, or by giving extraordinary alms to the poor.

The pilgrimage to Mecca is enjoined on all who can perform it[p]. The sacred temple at which they pay their devotions stands near the centre of the city. The Caaba, a square stone building, is the part of it which is most revered. It was probably built by the idolatrous Arabians for their idols; but the Mahomedans are instructed to think that God, in compliance with the prayer of Adam, let fall from heaven a model of the holy building, the resemblance of which our first father had seen in paradise. Adam was wont to turn towards the representation of the celestial temple, when he prayed: his son, Seth, built a house of the same form, of stone and clay. This was destroyed by the deluge, rebuilt by Abraham, and his son, Ishmael, on the same spot, and of a similar shape, which he was enabled to do from having its dimensions explained to him by a divine revelation[q].

The celebrated black stone[r] within the Caaba is an object of the greatest veneration; every pilgrim kisses it, and hears

[p] Sale's Koran, chap. iii. Every person is to perform the pilgrimage who has a beast to ride upon, and who can supply himself with provisions for the journey. Ool-Shaffei says, those who have money, if they cannot go, should perform this journey by deputy. Malik thinks all who have strength sufficient should go to Mecca: but Ool-Haneefa deems both money and health of body requisite, before it can be deemed obligatory.

[q] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 155.

[r] This celebrated stone is set in silver, and fixed in the south-east corner of the temple. It is deemed one of the precious stones of paradise that fell to the earth with Adam; being preserved at the deluge, the angel Gabriel brought it to Abraham when he was building the Caaba. It was at first white, they say, but its surface has become black from coming in contact with those who are impure and sinful. Many other fables are told of this object of idolatrous worship.

of its extraordinary history and wonderful properties. Another stone, hardly less sacred, is shown at a spot called the Palace of Abraham, where the devout visitor is told to observe the prints of that patriarch's footsteps, made when he came to see his son; and his attention is particularly directed to the holy well of Zemzem, which burst forth at the command of God to relieve the drooping Hagar, when she brought the infant Ishmael to the barren plains of Arabia[s].

The Temple of Mecca has since been enlarged and ornamented by the piety and munificence of Mahomedan sovereigns, and is annually crowded with pilgrims[t] from every region to which the faith has extended. It would occupy too much space to give a minute description of all the forms of this important ceremony; the enemies of the religion have justly described them as closely allied to idolatry and superstition. Mahomed probably compromised with his first converts: when he discovered that he could not withdraw them from their habitual veneration to the place of devotion of their fathers, he conciliated them by adopting this sacred object of their affection and reverence; and was satisfied, if he could transfer their adoration from their idols to the true God, that they should retain a small portion of the mummery of their former worship.

Both wine and games of chance are forbidden by the Koran, on the ground that their sinfulness is greater than their use[u]. Mahomed also forbad his followers to eat the blood of animals, the flesh of swine, or of any creature that died of itself. Among the ancient Arabians, four months of the year were deemed so sacred, that all wars ceased. Mahomed commanded his followers to preserve this usage, if their enemies did; but under all circumstances he authorized instant retaliation of attack. It cannot be surprising

[s] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, vol. i. p. 157.
[t] For a full account of the pilgrimage, see Sale's Preliminary Discourse.
[u] Koran, chap. ii.

that an ordination so difficult to observe, and so easy to evade, should have met with little attention. Obedience may often have been given to this institution as a matter of policy, but seldom, if ever, from piety.

Friday[x] is the day appointed by Mahomed on which his followers are to assemble at the mosques to attend prayer[y]; but is not, like the sabbath of the Jews and Christians, a day of rest. The people assemble in the mosques; the Koran is read and expounded by the priests; and the day, from this ceremony, has a sacred character; but it passes unmarked by any other observance than attending public worship[z].

The fast of Ramazan, and the cause of its institution, have been mentioned. The Mahomedans have two festivals, which European writers term the greater and lesser Bairam. The first commences the day after the fast of Ramazan, and is called the Eed-ul-Fitr, or "the festival after abstinence." The second, which begins on the 10th of Zilhadge, is termed the Eed-ul-Koorban[a], or "feast of sacrifice," and is insti-

[x] Various causes are assigned for Friday being fixed by Mahomed as a day of public prayer. Some say it was the day of his arrival at Medinah; others, that the day received its name from one of Mahomed's ancestors, because on it the people assembled before him. It is also affirmed that it was declared sacred, because, according to the Mahomedans, God finished the creation on that day.—SALE's *Koran*, vol. ii. p. 425, note.

[y] Sale's Koran, vol. ii. p. 425.

[z] Though Friday is the day set apart for public worship, it is not the only one on which that is performed. The mosques are always open; and the Paish-Nâmâz, or officiating priest, attends three times every day at that to which he belongs—before the sun rises, in the afternoon, and after sunset. Those who are very exact in performing their religious duties accompany him. The priest says his prayers in the mosques, as in private, in an inaudible tone: the people, who stand behind him, also pray in silence. Once every day the Paish-Nâmâz should preach from the pulpit for half an hour or more; but on Friday this duty is obligatory. He takes for his text a verse from the Koran, or from one of the books of traditions, and expounds its meaning to the people. If the mosque be small, there is only one Paish-Nâmáz, or priest; when large, it is not uncommon to have two or three, and they all perform the religious service at the same time.

[a] The 10th of Zilhadge is the day appointed for slaying the victims by the pilgrims at Mecca.

tuted in commemoration of Abraham offering up Isaac. The rite of circumcision is not once mentioned in the Koran. It is considered as an act of imitative practice [b], founded on the example of the disciples, but not on that of the prophet himself [c]. It may be omitted where, from the age of the convert or any other cause, there might be danger from the operation; but it is seldom neglected. It is deemed the outward mark of a true believer; and the very fear that his corpse might in a day of slaughter be confounded with infidels, and thus be denied the holy rites of sepulture, is sufficient to make every man who professes the faith, anxious for its performance.

The Koran, which consists of a hundred and fourteen chapters, was not produced at once; and unbelievers may admire the policy which led to its gradual appearance. Mahomed early taught his disciples that it was sent entire from God to the lowest heaven by the hands of the angel Gabriel [d], by whom it was communicated to him in detached portions [e]. Between the first revelation and the last, twenty-three years intervened; and the Prophet declared, that during this whole time he held a continual intercourse with Gabriel, and was wont to dictate to a writer the different chapters, as that angel brought them to him. No mode could have been better calculated to preserve and to promote his power. He was at once the civil ruler and the military leader of his followers; and he drew at pleasure, from a source which they deemed divine, those laws and mandates which were to regulate their lives, and to excite them to

[b] It was taken from the Jews; and Mahomedans believe that it was first instituted by Abraham.

[c] Mahomed is said to have been born circumcised.

[d] This took place on the night of Ool-Kadr, or "the night of power, or glory." It is believed to be that between the 23rd and 24th of Ramazan; but Mahomedan doctors are not agreed about this date, except that it was during the month of Ramazan, the whole of which is deemed sacred on account of this auspicious event.

[e] The Koran was not even sent in chapters, but in small portions, several of which are often included in one chapter.

actions of virtue and valour. To guard against the errors of precipitation, he inculcated, that the commands he received from the Almighty were sometimes revoked; and he also warned true believers against literally interpreting all the passages in the Koran. Some parts were to be understood as they were written; while others were to be taken in a figurative sense[f]. By these precautions he was prepared to evade every charge of inconsistency or of false prophecy.

Mahomed was possessed of a graceful person, of ready eloquence, of courage, and of wisdom. In the state he found his country in, the means taken by this extraordinary man to propagate his doctrine and establish his power could hardly fail; and even his enemies must admit, that he entitled himself to the gratitude of his countrymen. The great majority of the Arabians, when he first proclaimed his mission, were ignorant idolaters, whose superstition was disgraced by the grossest and most inhuman usages[g]. They were divided at home and despised abroad. By adopting his religion, they learnt to pay exclusive adoration to one true and only God; and they obtained a strength from that political union, which was the consequence of their common creed, that enabled them to become masters of the fairest portion of the globe.

The Koran is written in the purest Arabic, and is deemed by Mahomedans of such surpassing beauty and eloquence, that they consider it impossible an uninspired human being

[f] The following passage in the Koran exemplifies its character in this respect:—

"There is no God but he, the mighty, the wise. It is he who hath sent down unto thee the book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of low schism, and a desire of the interpretation thereof; yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God."—SALE's *Koran*, vol. i. chap. iii. p. 53.

[g] Female infanticide was common over all Arabia, and is frequently reprobated in the Koran.

should have composed it. It cannot be expected that others should view either the language or the contents with equal enthusiasm. It has been summarily described by Volney as containing a few ordinances concerning polygamy, divorces, slavery, and the laws of succession; some emphatical declamations on the attributes of God; and a collection of puerile tales and extravagant fables. But in the pride of better knowledge, we should hardly venture to pronounce that puerile or contemptible, which has so fully answered its purpose, and which is still considered the standard of truth and perfection by so large a portion of the world. The Koran, with many of the defects ascribed to it, abounds in the finest passages in praise of the Almighty: its author dwells on the great and holy theme with an eloquent and enraptured fervor. The other parts were suited to the character, prejudices, and habits of those to whom the religion was offered, and whose degraded condition it was meant to improve. His success was astonishing: even those who shudder at his presumptuous profanation, have accorded an admiration to the man, which they refused to the prophet; and have not been able to consign to that contempt, which belongs to schemes of superstitious and idolatrous worship, a religion which, with all its errors, is grounded on one of the most rational and sublimest principles.

The purpose and manner of the Koran rendered it a volume of law, as well as of religion. Its author not only meant to instruct his followers in their duty to God, but towards each other; and his precepts have been acknowledged throughout Mahomedan nations as the sole basis of all their jurisprudence. The different passages and chapters were never put into any order by the prophet, and at his death were a confused heap of loose sheets. The important labour of forming them into a volume devolved on the first caliph, Aboobeker, who arranged them, without any attention to the times at which the revelations were made; but this was of no consequence, as each chapter is distinct, and

has no necessary connexion with that which precedes or follows it. The transcript made from the original sheets was committed to the custody of one of the widows of Mahomed; but, some years afterwards, the caliph Osman, discovering that many spurious editions were dispersed over the empire, directed that a number of copies should be taken from the one which Aboobeker had made, and that they should be distributed to the faithful, who were commanded to burn and destroy all other editions as erroneous[h].

The spirit of division, which appeared among the followers of the Prophet, even before his death, broke out with great violence after it; and the rapid strides of his successors to imperial power only afforded this spirit a wider sphere of action. It would fill a volume even to name the various sects which have sprung up. It is only meant to describe that of the Sheahs, which has become the national religion of Persia, and to notice the doctrines of the Soofees, which have spread over that kingdom; but it will be necessary first to say a few words on the progress of the Soonee faith; which, from the great majority who have concurred in it, claims the distinction of being the orthodox religion.

The Koran, as a book of law, was only suited to a rude society, like the Arabian tribes for whom it was framed. When the power of the caliphs was extended, it became impossible to govern their numerous subjects by the comparatively few rules and maxims which this volume contained; and the difficulty was increased, from a great portion of them being local, and altogether inapplicable to many of the nations who had embraced the Mahomedan religion. The fundamental principle however of this faith required, that, wherever it was introduced, all former usages and laws should be abolished; it was deemed profanation to desire knowledge on such a subject from any other than a divine source. There appeared therefore no remedy, but to render it more copious. An account of the actions and tradi-

[h] Sale's Preliminary Discourse, p. 86.

tionary sayings of the prophet, who was believed never to have acted or spoken but by inspiration, and whose every act and word was in consequence considered as a law, was collected from his wives and companions. This immense collection was termed Soona, and regarded by the Soonees[i], or those who believed in it, as of equal authority with the Koran. But the materials for the government of great empires were yet incomplete. Some part of the Koran was obscure and figurative; many of the traditions were vague, and still more contradicted each other. To remedy the confusion and evils arising from these causes, the most learned and able Mahomedan divines devoted themselves to the explanation of these holy records; but it was evidently impossible that they should limit themselves to the mere exposition of texts. They sought to acquire fame by propagating their own opinions, and by adding their dogmas to those of their prophet and his immediate successors. Schisms were multiplied in every quarter; but the great mass of believers settled at last in recognising the authority of four eminent doctors, Haneefa, Malik, Shaffei, and Hanbal; who were considered holy and learned men in their lives, and since their deaths have been canonized as the four Imâms[k], or high priests, of the established orthodox religion.

[i] The Jews had also a code of traditions; and it was a saying with the Pharisee, (who may be termed the Jewish Soonee,) that the words of the *Scribes* were lovely, above the words of the law, and more weighty than the law and the prophets. In allusion to this it is said: "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions."—*Matthew*, xv. 6.

[k] The sacred title of Imâm is by the Sheahs given only to the immediate descendants of the prophet, who are twelve. The last of these, the Imâm Mehdy, is supposed by them to be concealed (not dead), and the title which belongs to him cannot, they conceive, be given to another; but among the Soonees it is a dogma, that there must be always a *visible Imâm*, or "father of the church." The title is given to the four learned doctors who are the founders of their faith. It was long maintained that the Imâm must be descended from the Arabian tribe of Koreish; but the Emperors of Constantinople (who are of a Tartar family) have assumed the sacred title, which they claim on the ground of the formal renunciation by Mahomed the

These saints differed in expounding parts of the Koran and the traditions; but their followers have concurred in tolerating their differences, which relate more to forms than essentials, and have become consolidated into one belief: this is termed the Soonee, in other words, the belief of those who assent to the Soona, or oral traditions, and who consequently acknowledge the first caliphs, from whom most of these traditions were derived, as the chosen companions and legitimate successors of the prophet. The four sects mentioned above have been called the four pillars of the Soonee faith; each has a separate oratory at the Temple of Mecca; but this and their other distinctions have not disturbed their union, which has been cemented by their common alarm at the progress of schisms, that threatened, if they spread, not only to alter the faith, but to overthrow the whole system of their jurisprudence; for this was established on authorities, the purity and legality of which the heretics openly denied.

Among the principal schisms was that of the Sheahs; which, from the commencement of the Seffavean dynasty, became the religion of Persia. The term Sheah has been already explained, and a short account has been given of the sect. From the death of Mahomed, the adherents of Ali maintained his right of succession to the caliphate, and deemed those by whom that right had been set aside the greatest of sinners. The talents, the piety, and the reputation of the three first caliphs preserved the empire from the effects of this discontent; and the ultimate elevation of Ali satisfied for a time the clamour of his friends: but his death and that of his sons, and the misfortunes of his descendants, who, though admitted to the rank of Imâms, were excluded from all temporal power, led numbers to cherish in secret the principles of the Sheah sect, and to mourn over the hard lot of the descendants of

Twelfth, the last caliph of the race of Abbas, in favour of Selim the First. The acknowledgment of this title renders the Emperor of Turkey the spiritual head of all orthodox Mahomedans.

their holy prophet. The Persians were the first nation who proclaimed themselves of this sect, and who vowed eternal hatred and war against the Soonees. More than three centuries[l] have elapsed since the Sheah faith became the adopted religion; and, during that whole period, a regard for its tenets has been the cause or the pretext of almost every war. Surrounded by Soonees, whether the Persian has been called upon to invade the territories of the Turks, the Affghans, or the Tartars, or to repel their attacks, he has always been summoned by the same watchword; and the belief that the Sheah faith was in danger has never failed to rouse him. Nâdir Shah, at the summit of his power, attempted to destroy a feeling, of which he had proved the efficacy for the purpose of defence, because, as it excited hatred in other nations, it might obstruct his plans of extended conquest; but the attempt failed, and the attachment of the Persians to their faith continues as decided as ever. It is important, therefore, to understand those feelings which have had, and continue to have, so powerful an influence; and we cannot, except by a careful study of the tenets peculiar to the Sheahs.

The great and radical difference between the Soonee and Sheah doctrine, arises from the latter maintaining the divine and indefeasible right of Ali to succeed to the caliphate at the death of the prophet. His claims, they assert, rested on his being the first convert, and consequently the eldest in the faith; on his nearness of kindred to Mahomed, of whom he was a cousin; and on his having married Fatima, the only offspring of the prophet. They also affirm that he was expressly declared his successor[m]; and that those by whose

[l] Ismael, the first Seffavean king, ascended the throne A.D. 1499, and proclaimed the Sheah faith the national religion.

[m] Sheah writers say, that when the angel Gabriel informed Mahomed he must prepare to die, the prophet proceeded towards Mecca. On the road, he came to a place called Khoom-e-Ghuddeer, where he declared Ali his heir, on the 18th of Zehadge, which is celebrated by an annual festival, called the Eed-ul-Ghuddeer, or "the festival of Ghuddeer."

intrigues he was deprived of his inheritance, acted in direct contradiction to the will of God, as signified through the prophet. The same great temporal and spiritual power, which they conceive should have immediately descended to Ali, ought, in their opinion, to have been transmitted to his lineal descendants; and they deem not only the three first caliphs, Aboobeker, Omar, and Osman, but all the caliphs who took the title of "Lord of the Faithful," illegal usurpers of power. This belief is hostile to the whole fabric of the Soona, or traditions of the Soonee sect; it denies all that part of the traditions which rests on the authority of the three first caliphs, whose very names are abhorrent to the Sheahs. They admit, however, the legality of the Soona, except where its source is contaminated by crime or disobedience[n] to God. Their leading principle is an adherence to the relations and descendants of Mahomed, whom they deem to have partaken in a lesser degree of his sacred nature; and the title that Sheahs love to be distinguished by, is that of "the friends of the family."

The Sheahs disbelieve and contemn the four great Imâms, the founders of the Soonee doctrine. These learned doctors, they affirm, have propagated many erroneous and impious opinions, both in matters of faith and practice; and they contend, that the worldly policy, which has led to the monstrous compound of their contradictory tenets into one faith, must involve all who adopt it in inexplicable difficulties. In support of this opinion, they argue that, as it is acknowledged there is only one path of truth, it becomes evident, that if the followers of Haneefa, or any other Soonee saint, are right, those of the remaining three must be wrong; and after all, they ask, "Is it not better to trust to what we have received from God and his prophet, and from those who lived during his mission, and have transmitted his sayings,

[n] They accuse the three first caliphs of disobedience, on the ground of their knowledge of Ali's superior right, and of the prophet's desire that he should be his successor.

than to give our minds over to these pretending doctors of divinity and of law[o]; and thus to constitute their fallible works the standard of our faith and the rule of our lives[p]?"

The difference in these points between the Soonee and Shea sect is rancorous and irreconcilable. It is one in which the passions are easily arrayed; for it relates to no speculative or abstruse points of faith, but is interwoven with the history of their religion. Names which are never mentioned but with blessings by one sect, are hourly cursed by the other. The hypocrisy, ingratitude, and disobedience of the three first caliphs are the essential dogmas of the Sheahs; while the leading principle of the Soonees is, that, next to

[o] The orientalists have ever been fond of illustrating arguments by anecdotes. A Sheah doctor of laws was summoned to a meeting, in which four doctors of the orthodox sects were to decide whether Sultan Khodâh-bundâh, the great grandson of Chenghiz, could take back a wife whom he had divorced three times, without conforming to the prescribed usage, founded on the Soonee law, of her first marrying and cohabiting with another. The Sheah doctor, with a pretended clownish manner, instead of leaving his slippers at the door, secured them under his arm. This action produced much mirth; and the reason of it was demanded. "We have a record in my family," said the man, "that one of our ancestors, who lived in the days of the prophet, had his slippers stolen by a follower of Haneefa!" All burst into laughter; and he was informed that Haneefa did not propagate his doctrine till a century after the prophet's death. "It must have been a follower of Malik, then." The mirth became louder: the ignorant doctor was instructed that Malik came after Haneefa. "Then it was Shaffei;" but he was still later. "It must have been Hanbal!" said the Sheah, affecting anger. This holy man, he was informed, did not publish his works till the second century of the Hijrah. The Sheah doctor started back with pretended surprise at this information, and exclaimed, "Why, if all you say is true, these holy saints, whose opinions you desire to make our laws, lived so long after the prophet, that they could know no more than you and I, gentlemen, except as they might happen to be more or less learned!" Saying this, he arose and took his departure; but was soon sent for by the king, who asked him if he thought he might take back his wife, without first allowing her to be married to another? "If there is no greater authority than the opinion of these modern saints against it, I can see no sin in your doing so," was the reply. The king was rejoiced, and immediately acted on his opinion: and this circumstance is supposed to have had no slight weight in disposing Mahomed Khodâh-bundâh to believe in the Sheah doctrines.—*Persian MS.*

[p] Persian MS.

the prophet, these rulers were beyond all others entitled to regard and veneration. A stranger to the name of Mahomed is more acceptable to a zealot of either religion than the opposite sectary, who insults him with an hourly attack of his favorite tenets; and their disagreement, as has been stated, relates to matters of faith, or rather opinion, more than of practice. The differences in their mode of worship and customs are slight[q], and have arisen ont of the hate they bear each other, and their dislike to have any usage in common. Innumerable volumes have been written on these disputes. Their effect has been like that of most works in religious controversy: they have oftener irritated than convinced; but it is justice to their authors to observe, that they frequently display taste and learning. Every effort is made to arrest the attention of the reader. The arguments are often shaped into a dramatic form, to render them attractive; and the zealous writer condescends to amuse the fancy, in the hope that it may aid his object of informing the judgment.

It has been before observed, that the religion and laws of a Mahomedan nation always flow from the same fountain; the consequence is, that they regard with sacred veneration all those by whom their laws are made or expounded. These must, generally speaking, be acknowledged as saints before they are recognised as lawgivers; and an attack on the sanctity of their character strikes at once at the faith and jurisprudence of the countries where their authority is acknowledged. It has ever been one of the great disputes between the Soonees and Sheahs, that the latter deny all respect and confidence to the four great lawgivers on whom the former rest the whole superstructure of their usages and ordinances, if not their religion. It will elucidate this subject to state some of the objections made to the dogmas of these reputed saints.

[q] They consist in the mode of holding the hands, of prostration, and other forms equally immaterial.

Aboo Haneefa, who lived[r] in the first century of the Hijrah, who is represented to have been a man uniting great modesty and piety with a plain, solid understanding, and whose tenets are praised from their being founded more on reason than on traditions, is accused by the Sheahs of ignorance and presumption. They assert, that among other deviations from the true path, he departed from the obvious text of the Koran, in allowing his followers to drink wine[s], after its spirit had been a little evaporated by boiling; and that he also altered a number of practices concerning prayer and purifications, which are inculcated in that volume and the admitted traditions. As a proof of his ignorance, the Sheah writer[t] with triumph alleges, that he confessed his inability to decide whether a hermaphrodite could be admitted into paradise, or a genius become perceptible to the human vision.

Imâm Mâlik was also born[u] in the first century of the Hijrah; and, if we believe Soonee writers, he was no less remarkable than Haneefa for his modesty and piety. We

[r] Haneefa-ool-naaman-ebn-Thabet was born in the eightieth year of the Hijrah, and died in the hundred and fiftieth. His followers assert that he was designated by an huddees, or saying of the prophet, that Aboo Haneefa was "the lamp of the faithful:" but this was probably invented by some zealous disciple, to give him superiority over the others. We are told by Ool-Ghazali, a respectable writer, that Haneefa ended his life in prison at Bagdad, because he refused to accept the office of judge, for which he thought himself unfit. When urged by his friends to take this station, he replied, "I choose rather to be punished by men than by God." When asked the reason why he said he was unfit, he answered, "If I have spoken the truth, I am unfit; if I have uttered a falsehood, a liar is not fit to be a judge."—Sale's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 206.

[s] I follow the author of the Absar-ool-Moostubsureen, or "The Eyes of Acute Observers;" a work of considerable reputation. He accuses Haneefa of allowing his disciples to drink *nubeez*, a kind of wine made from dates or raisins; which, he asserts, is in direct opposition to the sacred tradition, "that every thing which intoxicates is wine," and that "every wine is unlawful."—*Absar-ool-Moostubsureen*.

[t] Absar-ool-Moostubsureen.

[u] The Imâm Abd-ool Mâlik was born between the year of the Hijrah ninety and ninety-five, and died A.H. 177.

are informed, that out of forty-eight questions which were put to him, he returned thirty-two with a declaration that he could not answer them. "A noble and frank confession of ignorance," observes a Mahomedan writer [x], "which, in a man of such learning and reputation, could only proceed from a mind, the sole object of which was truth and the glory of God." This modest and wise doctor, however, is accused by Sheah writers of being the bold propagator of falsehood and vice. They assert [y], that he taught that the flesh of all animals, except swine and beings endowed with reason, might be eaten; and they quote his writings to prove that, in certain cases, he affirmed the legality of a practice which cannot be named, but which all other Mahomedan teachers have deemed infamous.

Shaffei [z], the third Imâm of the Soonees, who was born [a] in the second century of the Hijrah, is said by all Soonee writers to have been a learned and virtuous man, who laboured to arrange the traditions [b] so as to render them useful as a code of laws. He introduced several alterations of religious forms, but advanced few doctrines that can be deemed innovations. We may judge of the injustice of his enemies from their accusations; one of the principal is, that he departed from that text of the Koran which prohibits gambling, by allowing his disciples to indulge in a few games of chess [c].

Hanbal, the fourth Imâm [d], was at first an opposer and

[x] Ool-Ghazali.

[y] Absar-ool-Moostubsureen.

[z] Chardin (vol. ii. p. 237, old edit.) observes, that the Sheahs are almost all followers of Shaffei, the Soonees of Haneefa. This is an error of extraordinary magnitude in a writer of so much experience and observation. The Sheahs have always held Shaffei and his doctrines in abhorrence.

[a] Ebn Edris-ool-Shaffei was born at Ascalon in Palestine, A.H. 150, educated at Mecca, and died in Egypt A.H. 204.

[b] One Mahomedan author wittily observes, "that the relaters of the traditions were asleep till Ool-Shaffei came and awakened them."—SALE'S *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 208.

[c] He limited them to three games at a sitting.

[d] Ebn Hanbal was born in A.H. 164. Some authors state, that "he was

afterwards a follower of Ool-Shaffei, from whom he boasted to have learnt most of the traditions he knew; and we are assured that he was able to repeat a million[e]. He appears to have been bolder than any of his predecessors, and to have taught doctrines which subjected him to the most cruel persecution. The Sheahs accuse him, not only of having allowed his followers to relieve occasional lowness of spirits by intoxicating drugs[f], but of propagating the most profane doctrines concerning the nature of the Almighty, whom his followers were taught to believe a corporeal being.

One Sheah author[g] describes the God of the sect of Hanballee as "having curled locks; of being immaterial from the head to the breast; but consisting from the breast downwards of one solid soft mass:" and he asserts, that this learned doctor explained the verse in the Koran which states, that "the merciful God is upon the heavens," to mean, "that the Deity sat four fingers above the firmament in such a manner that his knees reached below it." He adds, that the followers of Hanbal have proclaimed opinions still more impious. "They believe that on the day of resurrection, when men shall be called before God to worship him, Fatima, the daughter of Mahomed, shall advance to the judgment-seat to petition for justice on the murderers of her sons, Hoossein and Hussun; but God, they say, will show his thigh, and display a cloth that covers a wound upon it; while a voice will be heard to exclaim, 'The arrow which Nimrod[h] shot at heaven with intention to destroy me,

born at Merv, in Khorassan, of which city his parents were natives; and that his mother brought him from thence to Bagdad at her breast: while others assure us, that she was with child of him when she came to Bagdad, and that he was born there."—SALE's *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 208.

[e] Hamilton's Commentary on Mahomedan Laws, P. D. p. 29.

[f] He allowed his disciples, the author of the Absar-ool-Moostubsureen asserts, to take *bung*, a very intoxicating drug, in a quantity not exceeding the size of a pistachio nut; which, another Sheah writer remarks, was probably his own dose.

[g] I translate from the Absar-ool-Moostubsureen.

[h] According to Mahomedan legends, Nimrod pretended to divine power, and shot an arrow at the heavens to kill the Almighty.

wounded my thigh. I have not permitted it to heal, that I might show it you; and that, if the God you adore sustained so great a wrong from a being whom he created, you should not be surprised at the sufferings your sons endured from their own tribe.'" The followers of this doctor, the same writer observes, assert, "that the Almighty had one day a pain in his eyes[i], and informed the inquiring angels that it was an inflammation brought on by the torrents of tears which he had shed at the deluge:" and they also affirm, "that every Thursday night God assumes the shape of a beautiful boy, and descends from heaven upon an Egyptian ass; and that it was very common to build a small manger on the tops of their mosques, near which they burnt incense, and deposited some fine straw and grain, for the refreshment of the animal on which the Almighty rode, in the event of his descending at that spot."

It is evident from this example, that the Sheah writers endeavour to defame and discredit the Imâms of the Soonees, by ascribing to them not only every doctrine propagated by the most absurd or visionary of their followers, but also those of other sects. The impious tenets here charged on the disciples of Hanbal, should properly be ascribed to those of the Ebn-ul-Keram, the celebrated founder of the Keramites: that sect, by their literal acceptation of the figurative parts of the Koran, have been led into a gross heresy, deemed at once monstrous and blasphemous by almost all other Mahomedans, who, generally speaking, entertain the purest and most sublime belief of the divine nature and attributes.

The Sheahs also accuse the four Imâms of having altered several sacred institutions, particularly that about the division of the khums[k], or fifth share of spoil taken in war;

[i] The author of the Absar-ool-Moostubsureen states, that he takes this fact from the Mouakiff, a work which he asserts is held in high estimation by the sect of Hanballee.

[k] The Khums is described in the Koran as the property of God, his prophet, and his relations, or men of his tribe, (Benee Haschim,) who are poor

with respect to which, they affirm, the Soonee doctrines are at complete variance with the practice of Mahomed and the text of the Koran. They also assert, that they have altered forms of prayer, and made deviations on other points from traditions of acknowledged authority, for the express and sole object of establishing usages[l] opposite to those of the Sheahs: on all these grounds they hold the names of Haneefa, Malik, Shaffei, and Hanbal, in abhorrence, and consider as wanderers from the true path all who follow their heretical doctrines.

It would be tedious to enter into a methodical disquisition on the innumerable points of difference between these two sects: a short reference to some of their most popular productions will be the best mode of elucidating their tenets, and of showing the style of their most esteemed theological disputants.

In a letter written by some Soonee priests with the army of a Tartar monarch[m] who attacked Meshed, to the Sheahs

and destitute. The right of the Benee Haschim to a share in the khums is grounded on their being excluded from any portion of the zukaat. The Ubsar-ool-Moostubsureen expressly states, that when "the fifth of the captured property had been separated, Mahomed divided it into *six* portions; *three* the prophet took for himself, and the three remaining he divided equally among orphans, beggars, and travellers, of the tribe of Benee Haschim, to compensate them for the religious charity (zukat), in which, by the Koran, it was considered unlawful for them to share."

It is one of the most serious charges which the Sheah writers make against the three first caliphs, that they altered this usage, and took the whole of the khums to themselves, to the exclusion of the sacred family, and the tribe of the prophet; but we find it stated in a learned work on Mahomedan law, that, according to the Soonees, shares of the khums should be given to orphans, the poor, and travellers.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. ii. p. 179.

[l] The Soonees are accused of making the tops of graves convex instead of flat, (the shape ordered by a tradition,) for no reason but opposition to the Sheahs.—*Absar-ool-Mustubsureen*.

[m] Obeid Oollâ, sovereign of the Oosbegs. He was the nephew of the celebrated Shahibeg Khan, the conqueror. He commenced his reign about A.D. 1542.

in that city, we find a catalogue of the heresies with which the Sheahs are charged, and for which they are doomed (if we are to believe the authors of this anathema) to total destruction in this world, and everlasting misery in that to come. They are accused of not only denying the authority, but vilifying the character of those who are declared in the Koran to be the chosen companions of the holy prophet. They are reminded that even Ali, the Lord of the Faithful, whose undaunted valour was never questioned, submitted to the three first caliphs; and that these cannot be accused of usurpation, without implicating him in base submission to illegal authority. The Sheahs are upbraided with their calumnies against Ayesha, and are accused of having dishonoured the prophet by their abuse of his wife. On the ground of these and many other heresies, they are denounced as the worst of infidels. "Your property," it is said, "is legitimate plunder for those who fight for the true faith: and as to the fields and gardens around Meshed, which, you inform us, are the unalienable property of the holy Imâm Rezâ, consecrated to him by the ancestors of the present Persian monarchs, we can only reply, that, in a country which it is proper and lawful to plunder, the army of the faithful cannot stop to distinguish the lands appropriated for religious purposes, from those that belong to the profane inhabitants; but, supposing the distinction made, the revenues of this holy property would, after all, be expended by true believers: and if it cannot from circumstances be given to those who should receive it, it becomes the duty of our conquering prince to divide it in legal shares among his brave warriors."

This anathema, which is supported by verses from the Koran, by traditions, and by stanzas from pious poets, breathes the same spirit, and recapitulates the same arguments, as are to be found in the declarations of all the Soonee princes who have invaded Persia since the Sheah doctrine was established. This particular document has

probably been preserved, on account of the eloquent answer to it by a Sheah priest [n], resident in Meshed.

This able divine, whose name was Moollah Mahomed, declares in the commencement of his letter, that he intends to oppose to the charges of heresy made against the Sheahs no arguments but from the Koran, and from those traditions, the authenticity of which is acknowledged by the learned of both sects: he proceeds to prove from one [o] of these authorities, that when the prophet was dying, he heard disputes in his chamber, and called for pen, ink, and paper, exclaiming to those around him, "I wish to write what will keep you in the true path after my death." But Omar (the future caliph) forbad it to be given, observing, that Mahomed was in a delirium. "Have we not the Koran?" he added: "what more can we want?" The prophet, enraged at these words and at their disputes, commanded them to leave him. He adduces other acts of disobedience in the three first caliphs; and concludes, on the authority of that verse in the Koran which states "He who obeys not the person I have sent is an infidel," that they were infidels, and ought to have been excluded from the caliphate on that ground, even if they had possessed legal claims.

The writer denies the truth of the tradition brought forward to show that Mahomed praised the caliphs; but observes, that if admitted, it proves nothing; for that his praise could only refer to their past lives, and could never be used as a shield to cover errors and crimes [p] subsequently

[n] This priest is called in the original MS. Moollah Mahomed Roostemdaree; but the latter term was, no doubt, the name of his tribe or family.

[o] The Mouakiff, by Humdee. This fact is also mentioned in the Saheb-e-Bochara.

[p] The author does not deny that the prophet might have had prescience of their guilt; but this, he states, gave him no power to prevent it. Ali, he adds, returned his sword to the son of Muljim, observing, "I shall be slain by that weapon; but justice forbids my preserving my life by a crime." Such that holy personage deemed the punishment of guilt before its perpetration.

committed. He ridicules the importance which the Soonee divines have given to the term companion, which Mahomed used to Aboobeker when concealed with him in the cave. "Its obvious signification," he observes, "is the best refutation of such an argument. It merely means the person that is with another, and has no relation to his virtue or religion:" to prove this he asserts, that "the most learned commentators have declared, that the prophet quoted the very expression[q] used by Joseph when imprisoned in Egypt: and the companions who were addressed by the son of Jacob were both idolaters."

In answer to the accusation that Ali, by submitting to the other caliphs acknowledged their right, he replies, "that the number of followers they had collected, and the measures they had adopted, while Ali was occupied with the obsequies of the prophet, made it impossible for him to assert his right, without a civil war, which, whatever its issue, would have caused great bloodshed. This forbearance can never be an argument against his right; for Ali, though brave, was certainly exceeded in courage by his uncle, Mahomed, who, when surrounded by the first heroes of the faithful, fled before the infidels of the tribe of Koreish, and after a long period, rejoiced to obtain a truce; yet this never led to a conclusion that the Koreish were right, or that the prophet, by making peace with them, admitted them to be so. But it is evident, that God himself has often shown forbearance towards infirm mortals, who have aspired to his throne; and if the Almighty, clothed in all his power, has for inscrutable causes acted thus to the wicked, who shall arraign the conduct of Moortezâ Ali on this occasion?"

Though Mahomedans are generally agreed that power can neither descend to or be transmitted by females, the Sheahs labour to prove that Fatima, the only offspring of

[q] When Mahomed was in the cave, he exclaimed, "Oh! my two companions in this prison, is your trust in many gods, or do you believe in him who has no companion in power, and is invincible and omnipotent?"

Mahomed, was an exception to this rule; and that Ali had an additional claim to succeed his uncle, from having married her; while the right of his descendants to inherit the throne was still stronger, they being the only race who could boast the blood of the prophet. But they refuse that respect for the wives which they claim for the daughter of Mahomed, and justify their abuse of Ayesha, by urging, that she not only joined Moâveah in making war upon Ali, whom she knew to be the appointed successor[r] of her husband, but, by appearing at the head of an army, departed from the law which the prophet laid down, concerning that privacy in which it is the duty of the female sex to live. The author supports this latter accusation against Ayesha, by asserting, that it is written in one of the most authentic books of tradition, that when a blind man[s] was sitting with the prophet, one of his wives passed through the room. The lady, on being reproved, observed, that the man was blind. "But thou seest," was the answer of Mahomed; which, to such as believe in this tradition, is a law prohibiting a female from looking on any man but her husband or nearest male kindred. The same writer repels the attack made on his sect, for including the prophet in the reproaches thrown upon Ayesha[t]. "If you were to establish," he tells his opponents, "a necessary connexion of character between a man and his wife, the conclusion would not only prove fatal to the reputation of Mahomed, but to the good prophets, Noah and Lot; and Assiah, the virtuous consort of Pha-

[r] All Sheah authors assume, that Mahomed positively declared on one occasion his desire that Ali should be his successor.

[s] His name was Omah Mukhtoom.

[t] "Soonee authors," Mollah Mahomed states, "have written that the holy prophet placed Ayesha upon his shoulders, in order that she might see a show in the public street; and that after she had looked at it for some time, he exclaimed, 'O my red-cheeked! art thou yet satisfied with the show?' She replied, 'No.' This story," the indignant Sheah adds, "which you relate of Mahomed, would not be believed of the most depraved of men; indeed, its enormity appears beyond all comment."

raoh, would be implicated in all the guilt of her wicked husband."

The Sheahs had claimed some consideration, on the ground of their being admitted to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, and associating, when there, with wise and pious men. To this their enemies had replied, in the words of the poet Jami [u], "He who has not got good in his heart, can derive no benefit from looking on the countenance of the prophet." An inaccuracy in this quotation gave Moollah Mahomed an advantage, which he seized with all the skill of an able disputant. "I certainly expected," he observes, "that men who have, or ought to have, read the Koran, and all the commentaries on that sacred volume, could have copied a Persian stanza without a mistake; but you have altered and rendered ungrammatical the words of the poet: no doubt conceiving, that after you had plundered and defaced his native province, it was but a trifling additional injury to spoil one of the beautiful lines of the celebrated Jami. This may appear a light remark, but it may be useful in teaching you not to be precipitate in forming a judgment on what you do not thoroughly understand [x]."

A number of proofs are brought forward to establish the superiority of the Sheah faith; and the writer concludes by saying, that if those who believe in this faith are wrong, their error is no cause for dooming them to destruction. "What knowledge," he demands of his antagonists, "can you have of the inward thoughts of those on whom you have pronounced so dreadful a sentence? The passions of kings are as a consuming flame, on which it behoves wise and good men to pour the water of moderate councils: but the anathema you have promulgated, when in the hands of

[u] Jami, who takes his name from his birth-place, the village of Jam, near Herat, was not more famous for his fancy and skill as a poet, than for his learning and sanctity as a divine. His poems (many of which are very beautiful) breathe in every line the most sacred rapture; hence he is oftener quoted by the writers on theology, than any other poet.

[x] MS. Letter of Moollah Mahomed.

the soldier, is the pretext for every excess and violence. And suppose that they who suffer from this act were infidels, such a proceeding could never be pleasing to God; for it is written, that in the day of judgment Noah shall stand abashed in the presence of his Creator, for having desired the death of sinners."

Among the works on the difference between the Soonee and Sheah sects, the latter esteem none more than a small tract, called Hussunneah, by one of their most learned divines. To mark his contempt for his adversaries, he has made a female slave, who gives her name to his work, the successful champion of his faith, in a public dispute supposed to be held before the caliph, Haroon-oor-Rasheed. It appears impossible to convey a better idea of the arguments by which the Sheahs support their principal dogmas, or of the style in which such subjects are treated, than by translating a part of this popular work; which, after shortly describing the history and character of Hussunneah, gives an account of her first disputation before the caliph.

The learned author[y] informs us, "that a merchant at Bagdad, when reduced to poverty from persecution on account of his religious persuasion, applied to a favorite and accomplished female slave to know what he should do to save himself from ruin. This lady, whose name was Hussunneah, or 'the beautiful,' and who had been carefully educated in the principles of the Sheah sect, in the house of the holy Imâm Jaffier[z], advised her master to go to the palace of Haroon-oor-Rasheed, and offer her for sale. 'Demand,' said she, 'a hundred thousand pieces of gold[a]; and if the caliph should ask why you put this immoderate

[y] Shaikh Abool Futtovah.

[z] Jaffier was the sixth Imâm. He was born A. H. 83, and died in A. H. 148. The scene is laid in the reign of Haroon, about A. H. 170, twenty-two years after the Imâm died: but the original only states, that Hussunneah was educated in Jaffier's family, not by him.

[a] The term in the original is dinar zere caliphate, a coin which may be estimated at nine shillings and twopence.

value on your slave, tell him to assemble his ablest disputants in theology, and that she will refute them all.' The merchant replied, 'I can never consent to this plan: the bigoted tyrant[b] will be enchanted by my praises of thee, and take thee from me; and I cannot exist without thee, who art the only delight I have left in the universe. 'Fear not,' said Hussunneah; 'by the blessing of the family of the holy prophet, no power shall separate me from thee while I live: rise up, and trust in God, who will order every thing for the best.' After much importunity, he was persuaded to go to Bermekee[c], the vizier of Haroon, to whom he stated his own situation and the qualifications of his slaves. The vizier directed him to bring her. The distressed merchant did as he was commanded. When Bermekee contemplated her beauty, and heard her eloquence and wisdom, he was struck with admiration. He proceeded instantly to his master, and explained all he had heard and seen. Hussunneah was ordered to attend. She came before the caliph veiled, and recited some verses in his praise, which delighted him. He desired her to unveil, and found her face a just index of her mind. Haroon sent for her master, and inquired the price of his slave. He replied, a hundred thousand pieces of gold. Haroon demanded in a rage, how he could ask such a price? 'I ask it,' said the man, 'because I know that the assembled religious men of your dominions will be unable to contend with her in a theological argument.' Haroon exclaimed in anger, 'Will you consent, if your slave should lose the victory, that I shall strike off your head, and take her for nothing?' 'What will you do,' said the man, 'if she is not defeated?' 'I will not only,' said the caliph, 'give you a hundred thousand dinars, but your slave back again.' The mer-

[b] The Sheahs always speak of Haroon-oor-Rasheed as a tyrant, from his persecution of the sect of Ali.

[c] The celebrated Jaffier Bermekee, for seventeen years the favorite vizier of Haroon-oor-Rasheed.

chant hesitated: 'Allow me,' said he, 'a little time, that I may again see Hussunneah?' Haroon consented: he went and spoke to his slave, who requested him not to hesitate a moment; for, through the aid of the holy prophet, she firmly hoped to triumph over her opponents. The merchant returned to Haroon, and agreed to his terms: the caliph immediately sent for Hussunneah, and asked her what faith she professed? 'I profess the faith of the prophet and his descendants,' said she, 'thanks be to God!' Haroon next asked whom she considered the proper successor of the prophet? Hussunneah replied, 'O Haroon, assemble thy learned men, and then I will state all I can; and if any object to my faith, he will speak and I shall answer him.' Haroon understood from this that she was an adherent of the family[d], in modern phrase, a Sheah. He immediately called his minister, Bermekee, and said, 'This slave is not of our faith; let her be put to death.' The minister replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful! she has undertaken a great task, and one in which she will probably fail. The moment of her discomfiture will be the proper one for her execution: but if she succeed in confuting the holy and wise men of the empire, it would be wrong to put such a person to death; on the contrary, she will merit favour and notice.' Haroon was satisfied, and ordered all the learned men[e] in his kingdom to be assembled. About four hundred obeyed his summons; among whom Ibrahim Nizam of Bussorah was deemed the first in sanctity and in knowledge. He had composed many works on theology, and a hundred volumes of his writing had been

[d] The title of Ahely Bayt, or "adherents of the holy family of the prophet," is one of which the Sheahs are very proud. They deem it a distinction between them and those Mahomedans who have neglected, injured, and persecuted his descendants.

[e] In the Persian MS. they are termed moollahs, which may be translated "learned men." Shaffei is described as one of the chief of those at Bagdad, and his fame appears grounded on a victory he had obtained in a public disputation over Aboo Yûsuph Razee.

dispersed over Syria and Egypt. When this distinguished personage arrived at the capital, the principal inhabitants and nobles were directed to pay their respects to him; and when the assembly met, he was placed in a golden chair, as a mark of his pre-eminence and of the favour he enjoyed. As soon as the caliph was seated, Hussunneah was called. She came veiled, attended by some women; after paying her respects to Haroon-oor-Rasheed, and wishing him prosperity and health, she proceeded, without waiting to have her place pointed out, to a seat on a level with that of Ibrahim Nizam, who looked quite magnificent in his golden chair.

"Haroon made a signal for Hussunneah to commence the disputation. She comprehended him, turned to Ibrahim Nizam, and said, 'Thou art the man who hast spread a hundred volumes of thy works among mankind, and who considerest thyself heir to the knowledge of the holy prophet, on whom be the blessing of God!' Ibrahim Nizam replied in a rage, 'Dost thou begin to treat me with contempt? But what business can I have to argue with a female slave? Indeed, it is clear my doing so will bring ridicule on my holy profession.' 'It will be more honourable to your character and to your profession,' said the Vizier Bermekee, 'to object to the reasoning of Hussunneah than to her sex. It is a maxim among disputants, that words are to be attended to, not persons.' Encouraged by this, Hussunneah said, 'O Ibrahim! by the grace of God I shall bring thee to the ground with disgrace from that golden chair in which thou art seated!" and she began to put questions to him: but Ibrahim stopped her, and said, 'I have come from a distance, and therefore have the first right of interrogation.' 'Very well,' said Hussunneah, 'take the advantage you desire; question me.' The learned man commenced, and received the most eloquent answers to seventy questions that he put to Hussunneah. It is not necessary to say more, than that she replied to them all in the most prompt and convincing manner, and that Haroon-

oor-Rasheed and his whole court were filled with admiration at her extraordinary talents and genius. Hussunneah, observing the impression she had made, said, 'O Ibrahim! this mode of proceeding is very tedious, I fear the caliph will become weary; allow me now to interrogate you.' Ibrahim replied, 'I have yet three more questions to ask; if you answer them, I shall be satisfied.' 'Ask them,' replied the lady. 'Well, Hussunneah,' said he, 'declare who you think should have succeeded the holy prophet.' 'The person,' she replied, 'who was oldest in the faith.' 'Who was the oldest in the faith?' said the moollah. She answered, 'Ali, who was the son-in-law, cousin, and adopted brother of the holy prophet.' The brow of Haroon was clouded with a frown. Ibrahim saw this, and became bolder. 'Tell me,' said he, 'on what ground thou considerest Ali the oldest in faith. I say that Aboobeker was forty years of age when he embraced the religion of our prophet, at which time Ali was a boy; and the belief or unbelief, the obedience or disobedience of a child is of little consequence.' Hussunneah instantly exclaimed, 'If I prove to you that the faith and obedience, or want of belief and disobedience of a boy have consequence, and that a child, as you term him, is amenable to divine reward or punishment, wilt thou confess the faith of Ali in his boyhood?' Ibrahim replied, 'If thou dost so by sound and convincing argument, I will confess it.' 'Well,' said Hussunneah, what say you about the boy that Elias[f] put to death, as

[f] The text of the Koran calls the person who travelled with Moses Ool-Kadr, a saint, who is believed by Mahomedans to be the same as Elias; though some have confounded him with Phineas, and others with St. George. It is supposed by all commentators that Ool-Kadr is the saint to whom Mahomed alludes in the account of the adventures of Moses, in the eighteenth chapter of the Koran; a tale which will excite more curiosity in an English reader, from being obviously that on which the beautiful story of Parnell's Hermit is founded. "And coming to the rock," the Koran states, "they (Moses and his servant Joshua, the son of Nun) found one of our servants, unto whom we had granted mercy from us, and whom we had taught wisdom from before us. And Moses said unto him, 'Shall I

stated in the story of that prophet and of Moses, handed down to us in the holy Koran? What do you say to the answer which Elias gave to Moses, when interrogated on the murder of the child? 'As to the boy,' said he, 'his

follow thee, that thou mayest teach me part of that which thou hast been taught, for a direction unto me?' He answered, 'Verily thou canst not bear with me; for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge whereof thou dost not comprehend?' Moses replied, 'Thou shalt find me patient, if God please; neither will I be disobedient unto thee in any thing.' He said, 'If thou follow me, therefore, ask me not concerning any thing, until I shall declare the meaning thereof unto thee.' So they both went on by the sea-shore, until they went up into a ship; and he made a hole therein. And Moses said unto him, 'Hast thou made a hole therein that thou mightest drown those who are on board? Now hast thou done a a strange thing.' He answered, 'Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me?' Moses said, 'Rebuke me not, because I did forget; and impose not on me a difficulty in what I am commanded.' Wherefore they left the ship, and proceeded until they met with a youth, and he slew him. Moses said, 'Hast thou slain an innocent person, without his having killed another? Now hast thou committed an unjust action.' He answered, 'Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me?' Moses said, 'If I ask thee concerning anything hereafter, suffer me not to accompany thee: now hast thou received an excuse for me.' They went forward, therefore, until they came to the inhabitants of a certain city, and they asked food of the inhabitants thereof; but they refused to receive them. And they found therein a wall, which was ready to fall down; and he set it upright. Whereupon Moses said unto him, 'If thou wouldest, thou mightest doubtless have received a reward for it.' He answered, 'This shall be a separation between me and thee: but I will first declare unto thee the signification of that which thou couldest not bear with patience. The vessel belonged to certain poor men who did their business in the sea: and I was minded to render it unserviceable, because there was a king behind them who took every sound vessel by force. As to the youth, his parents were true believers, and we feared lest he, being an unbeliever, should oblige them to suffer his perverseness and ingratitude: wherefore we desired that their Lord might give them a more righteous child in exchange for him, and one more affectionate towards them. And the wall belonged to two orphan youths in the city, and under it was a treasure hidden which belonged to them; and their father was a righteous man: and thy Lord was pleased that they should attain their full age, and take forth their treasure, through the mercy of thy Lord. And I did not what thou hast seen of mine own will, but by God's direction. This is the interpretation of that which thou couldest not bear with patience."—SALE's *Koran*, vol. ii. pp. 117, 118, 119.

parents were believers, and we feared, lest he, being an unbeliever, should oblige them to suffer his perverseness and ingratitude.' Now tell me, Ibrahim, was it proper to put this boy to death, or was Elias unjust? If Elias was unjust, is it not strange that he should be praised by the Almighty, and his praises be written in the Koran?' Ibrahim was at a loss how to answer. 'I abandon this point,' said he: 'but what do you say concerning Ali, and Abbas, his uncle; they disputed about the right of inheritance to the prophet; each asserted he had the right, and they carried their complaints to Aboubeker. When two persons go to a judge, one must be right and one wrong?' The design of Ibrahim in putting this question, was to oblige Hussunneah either to offend the caliph and hazard her life, by declaring Abbas (who was the immediate ancestor[g] of Haroon-oor-Rasheed) in the wrong; or, should fear lead her to pronounce Ali wrong, to make her give up the whole argument, and abandon her creed. Hussunneah replied, 'I must answer thy question, Ibrahim, from the holy Koran.'—'Let us hear it,' said the learned man. 'God,' said Hussunneah, 'has told us through the prophet, that the angels Michael and Gabriel carried a dispute before David, in order to expose more strongly his crime in taking the wife of his poor subject Uriah. Now tell me, Ibrahim, which of these two disputing angels was in the wrong, and which in the right?' 'Both,' said Ibrahim, 'were in the right; it was to correct and punish David that they went before him with their dispute.' 'Thank God for this admission,' said Hussunneah: 'in like manner, both Moorteza Ali and Abbas were in the right; and it was to correct the crime of Aboobeker that they went before him. Abbas said, 'The right of inheritance is mine, because I am the uncle of the prophet.' Ali said, 'It belongs to me, as his

[g] Abbas was the uncle of Mahomed. His grandson was promoted to the caliphate; and the house of Abbas enjoyed power for several centuries. Haroon was the fifth caliph of his family.

cousin, son-in-law, adopted brother, and heir; and his daughter is now in my house, and Hoossein and Hussun (who are the lords of the Syuds and the sacred inheritors of paradise) are my children: I am indeed identified with the prophet.' When[h] Aboobeker heard all this, he said: 'God knows whose claim is just; but I have myself heard the prophet say, 'Ali is my heir[i], and the lord of my religion.' When Abbas heard this from the mouth of Aboobeker, he was enraged, and said, 'O Aboobeker, if thou hast heard this speech from the holy prophet, how comes it that thou sittest where thou art, as caliph, to the injury of Ali's right, as declared by thyself?' Aboobeker now perceived that both parties had come to expose his guilt. 'You are come,' he observed, 'to quarrel with me, not to appeal to my decision:' and having said this, he immediately left the assembly.' When Ibrahim heard this reply from Hussunneah, he said, that he also gave up this point: 'But tell me, he added, 'which you consider the most excellent, Ali, or his uncle Abbas?' 'Tell me,' said Hussunneah, quickly, 'which you deem most excellent, Humzâ or his nephew Mahomed? Why do you puzzle yourself so much with Ali and Abbas? If Ali was the most excellent, it was the glory of Abbas to have such a nephew; and if Abbas was superior, it must add to the honour of Ali to have such an uncle.' Haroon, who had marked with wonder the ingenuity and ability of Hussunneah, turned to Ibrahim Nizam, and said, 'I pity thy knowledge.'

"Hussunneah having answered all the questions which had been put to her, required permission to ask one of her holy and learned antagonist; 'and if he can reply to it in a satisfactory manner,' she added, 'I confess myself conquered. Tell me, Ibrahim, when the prophet left this earth, did he nominate an heir, or did he not?' Ibrahim

[h] The Sheah author adds a curse to the name of the first caliph.

[i] By another reading of this term in the MS., it is "payer of my debts," which is synonymous with heir, as it describes one of the first and most sacred duties of a legal inheritor.

said, 'He did not.'—'Was this omission,' said she, 'an error, or was it right? and was the election of caliph an error, or was it right in those by whom it was made? To which do you ascribe the error, Ibrahim; to the prophet or to the caliphs?' Ibrahim gave no answer: he could not say the prophet had committed an error, without injury to the faith; and if he admitted the caliph had been in the wrong, he gave up the point in dispute. He had also a dread of Haroon, and was silent. His distress for an answer was evident to all; a smile was to be seen on every face in the assembly; and the wise man of Bussorah was reproached with being defeated by a woman."

The work from which this has been translated, gives a series of disputations about dogmas on which the Sheahs and Soonees entertain opposite sentiments: in all the victory is given to Hussunneah; and it is added that Haroon-oor-Rasheed, convinced by her arguments, desisted from his persecution of the Syuds; that he also gave her a hundred thousand pieces of gold, according to the terms fixed, and directed her to return to her master, on whom he bestowed a dress of honour. However, he secretly advised this heroine of the Sheah faith to quit Bagdad, lest some misfortune should happen to her. The lady left the assembly in triumph: besides the presents she received from Haroon, many were bestowed on her by princes of the blood and other great persons. Ibrahim Nizam came down from his golden chair quite ashamed, and retired with Aboo Yusuph, Shaffei, and some other enemies of the Sheahs: the people laughed at them; and a cousin of Haroon was particularly witty at their expense. But notwithstanding this approbation, Hussunneah and the merchant, fearing the consequences of her victory, departed, as the caliph had advised, and took up their abode at Medinah.

The Persian author of this work says, that when he was returning from Mecca he stopped at Damascus, and obtained from a Syud of Syria the Arabic manuscript which he has translated. The probability is, that the book was first

written in Persian; and it is ascribed to Shaikh Abool Futtoyah of Rhe, a very eminent and zealous Sheah divine.

According to the doctrine of the Sheahs, a man, under circumstances of danger, may not only conceal his faith, but make a temporary profession of opposite sentiments. This unmanly tenet was originally forced on this sect by the oppressed and persecuted state in which they so long remained; and the pride of the Persians has brooked its continuance, rather than abandon the pilgrimage to Mecca: for they cannot perform it without testifying a respect for the memory of the first caliphs, as they visit their tombs[k]; and such an act is contrary to their belief. The strictness with which the Soonee possessors of Mecca enforce these concessions has greatly diminished the number of pilgrims from Persia; the mass of the population being satisfied with a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Ali and his sons Hoossein and Hussun, whose remains are deposited at Nujuff and Kerbelah, in the province of Bagdad; or to that of the Imâm Rezâ at Meshed in Khorassan. The sepulchres of these Sheah saints have been enriched with the most magnificent presents by pious devotees: monarchs have emulated each other in adding to their revenue, and increasing the splendour of their appearance. In the worship at these shrines, as at Mecca, many ceremonies have been introduced, bordering on a superstition remote from that pure Deism on which the Mahomedan religion is professedly grounded. But the followers of the prophet have relaxed from the primitive principles of their religion, and have granted a kind of adoration not only to him and his immediate descendants, but to a number of

[k] It is not a duty of the Sheahs to curse the first caliphs; but this reserve is more from prudence than feeling. When they hear any one execrate them, they never pass a heavier censure than to blame his indiscreet zeal. Omar is the particular object of their hatred. This probably proceeds from his great character. I was one day conversing with a very sensible and moderate Persian on the history of Omar, and praising him as the greatest of the caliphs. He assented to all the facts I stated, but said, *Een hummâh râst est laiken aukher sag-bood;* "This is all true, but he was a dog after all."

learned or pious men, who have been canonized as saints. The gratitude and veneration which the conduct of individuals[l] first created, has grown, by excessive indulgence and the passions excited by contrary opinions, into sacred reverence and devotion. Their very garments have become relics[m] of inestimable value; and in the course of time the same properties have been assigned to them as are supposed to have belonged to their possessors. From this common progress of superstition hardly one of the numerous sects into which the Mahomedan religion is divided can be deemed exempt[n]. The Sheahs not only pay this devotion

[l] The inordinate veneration paid to the early martyrs and confessors by their pious contemporaries, was the cause of many evils in the Christian church.

[m] There are relics at almost every shrine, particularly at that of Ali at Nujuff.

[n] The modern sect of Wâhâbee pretend that they are an exception. This sect was founded near a century ago by an Arab named Shaikh Mahomed, the son of Abd-ool Wâhâb, whose name they have taken. Shaikh Mahomed connected himself, in an attempt to reform the religion of his country, with Ebn-Saoud, the Prince of Dereah, the capital of the province of Nujud. Through the efforts of the saint, and the temporal power of Ebn-Saoud, and his son and successor, Abd-ool Azeez, the religion of the Wâhâbees is now established over the peninsula of Arabia. Their tenets are peculiar. They profess that there is one God, and that Mahomed is his prophet; but as the Supreme Being neither has nor can have any participator in his power, they say it is blasphemy to hold that Mahomed, the Imâms, or any saints, have any superintendence over the affairs of men, or will render them any aid hereafter. They deem Mahomedans infidels who deviate in any way from the plain, literal meaning of the Koran, and maintain, that to make war on all such is the duty of every Wâhâbee. It is one of these tenets, that all titles showing respect and honour to men are odious to God, who alone is worthy of high name: and they assert, that in conformity to what is revealed in the Koran; true Mahomedans should wage continual war against unbelievers, till they are converted, or agree to pay the tribute imposed on infidels; and that in the latter case they should be compelled to wear the coarsest garments, not be allowed to ride on horses, nor to live in splendid dwellings. They maintain, that the taxes (including zukaat and khums) levied by Mahomed are alone lawful: that swearing by Mahomed or Ali, or any person, should be prohibited, since an oath is calling a witness to our secret thoughts, which no one can know but God. They deem it a species of idolatry to erect magnificent tombs; but to kiss relics, &c. is idolatry itself: and they therefore affirm, that it is an action acceptable to God to

at the principal shrines that have been mentioned, but have an immense number of inferior saints and martyrs, at whose tombs they offer up their prayers. Every village in Persia can boast of some shaikh or holy person, whose character has obtained him a local reputation, and rendered his shrine sacred among the few acquainted with his name.

The Sheahs observe the same feasts as the Soonees; but the former have set aside the ten first days of the month Mohurum to mourn over the cruel fate of Hoossein and Hussun, the sons of Ali. On the last days of this feast they beat their breasts with violence, and, calling on the names of the two martyrs, pour curses on their enemies. It is during this ceremony that the lower order of the Sheahs give offence to the Soonees, by publicly cursing the three first caliphs, and particularly Omar. The Sheahs also observe a feast* on the day on which, according to their traditions, Mahomed named Ali his successor; an occurrence which the Soonees deny.

It has been before stated, that the Persians refuse their

destroy the tombs of Mahomedan saints in Arabia and Persia, and to appropriate their rich ornaments to worldly purposes, for which they were designed. They say, that it is wicked to mourn for the dead; for if they were good Mahomedans their souls are in paradise, at which their friends should rejoice. The Wâhâbees reject the traditions, limiting their belief to the Koran, which, they say, was sent from heaven to Mahomed, who was an excellent man, and much beloved by God. They continue to preserve the usages of circumcision, ablution, &c., which they found established, but consider them more as matters of practice and usage than of faith. The leading principle of this sect is their right to destroy and plunder all who differ from them; and those Mahomedans who do not adopt their creed, are represented as far less entitled to mercy than either Jews or Christians. Their progress was so great about ten years ago, as to excite considerable alarm in the Turkish government. Among other places, they plundered the rich tombs of Ali and his sons at Nujuff and Kerbelah. Their inroads are always dreadful, for they spare none who do not conform to their opinions; but they have lately met with some severe checks, and appear to be declining.

* The Persians also observe the 20th of Seffer, to commemorate the burial of the Imâm Hoossein's head at Kerbelah. It had been cut off when he was slain, and carried to Moâveah at Damascus; but was brought back to Kerbelah, and buried, forty days after his death.

assent to many of the traditions admitted by the Soonees; the latter also reject many which their opponents deem authentic, as these traditions not only relate to the faith, but to the form of prayer, and the usages and laws of those who believe in them. There are several points of practice, both in religious worship and civil usages, in which these sects differ widely. They neither agree in the manner of performing their ablutions, nor in the mode of holding their hands at prayer. They also differ in the law of divorce: and the Persians admit a legal concubinage, by which the parties are united for a limited period; a practice deemed by the Soonees a great profanation of the divine law. It would, however, be endless to describe the minute differences between the two sects. All that are essential have been noticed; and more is not necessary to convey a full idea of their opposite and irreconcilable nature.

The establishment of the Sheah faith as the national religion of Persia, gave to a country, in which patriotism was unknown, a principle of union, of equal, if not greater force. The Persians, however, are not so violent at present as they once were in their religious prejudices [p]: they deem their Soonee neighbours lost in error, but do not term them infidels. "They are believers [q]," they say, "because they recognize the holy mission of Mahomed, and worship God; but they have forfeited their claim to be denominated faithful [r], by adopting those who refused allegiance and acted with cruelty toward the nephew, the daughter, and the lineal descendants, of the holy prophet." The Soonees are not so charitable; though some of their ablest divines [s] have de-

[p] This change is not to be ascribed, as has been supposed, to the progress of civilization, but to the decrease of that fervor which attended the first introduction of the Sheah faith.

[q] The term Moslem signifies believer.

[r] Moumeen signifies faithful.

[s] According to a writer before quoted, Ool Ghazali, Shaikh Ashâree, and several other celebrated Soonee doctors of law, have declared that the Sheahs should not be considered as infidels.—*MS. Letter of* MOOLLAH MAHOMED.

clared that the Sheahs, though deluded, were still Mahomedans, almost all Soonee monarchs have been led by a mixture of religious and political motives, to treat them as a race of heretics worse than infidels; and, on this ground, the most pious of the rulers of Bokhara[t] have considered themselves entitled to make slaves of their Sheah prisoners; an act that would be impious, if these were deemed Mahomedans. The blasphemous tenets of the sect of Ali-alahyahs[u], or those who deem Ali a divinity[x], have been attributed by their enemies to the Sheahs; but the latter entertain a just abhorrence for the principles of this sect, whose numbers are not great, and who endeavour to conceal their usages (some of which are said to be of an obscene nature) under a veil of mystery.

In a chapter on the religion of Persia, it is impossible to pass over the Soofees. That extraordinary class of devotees has been before noticed; but they claim a fuller description. We discover from Mahomedan authors, that these enthusiasts were co-existent with their religion. Their rapturous zeal perhaps aided in no slight degree its first establishment; but they have since been considered among its most dangerous enemies. There can be no doubt that their free opinions on its dogmas, their contempt for its

[t] It has been before shown, that the bigoted Beggee Jân, ruler of Bokhara, did not hesitate to make his Sheah captives slaves; and he is reproached by Aga Mahomed Khan with allowing true believers to be sold like beasts in the market-place of his capital. The savage Turkuman tribes follow the example of this prince, but from other motives than those of religion. I one day asked a man of these tribes on what ground they made their Persian captives slaves? "Because," said he, "they are heretic Sheahs." "But suppose," I added, "those whom you took were Soonees." "Then," replied he very coolly, "we must turn Sheahs, for slaves we must have."

[u] For a description of this sect, see Mr. H. T. Colebrooke's Paper on the Origin and peculiar Tenets of certain Mahomedan Sects.—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii. p. 339.

[x] The accurate and learned Sale, in his Preliminary Discourse, has partly fallen into this error, and unjustly charges the Sheahs with considering Ali as equal, if not superior, to Mahomed.

forms, and their claim to an immediate communion with the Deity, are all calculated to subvert that belief for which they outwardly profess their respect; their progress has consequently been deemed as synonymous with that of infidelity. There is no country over which the tenets of the Soofees have, at different periods, been more widely diffused than over Persia. The great reputation acquired by one of their priests, enabled his descendants to occupy the throne for more than two centuries[y]; but the Seffavean monarchs were too sensible of the aid which their power derived from an established and understood religion, to indulge in the visionary dreams of their pious ancestors. Their country, however, continued to abound with persons believing the tenets which these had taught; and the increase of their numbers has of late years been so great in Persia, that the Mahomedan divines have called on the reigning king to defend the true faith from the attacks of several popular teachers, who, from the sanctity of their lives, and the delusive character of their doctrines, had acquired an alarming popularity. The monarch has adopted the most rigorous proceedings; and his severity has for the moment repressed a flame, which it would appear more calculated to increase than to extinguish.

It would be vain to attempt giving a full history of the Soofee doctrine; traces of which exist, in some shape or other, in every region of the world. It is to be found in the most splendid theories of the ancient schools of Greece, and of the modern philosophers of Europe. It is the dream of the most ignorant, and of the most learned; and is seen at one time indulging in the shade of ease, at another traversing the pathless desert. Every where it professes to be adverse to error and superstition, but exists by the active propagation of both. The wild and varied doctrines of their teachers are offered to the disciples, in place of the forms

[y] Ismael the First ascended the throne in A.D. 1500, and his family was subverted by Nádir Shah, A.D. 1736.

and usages of their religion. They are invited to embark on the sea of doubt, under the guidance of a sacred teacher, whom they are required to deem superior to all other mortals, and worthy of a holy confidence bordering on adoration. It is in India, beyond all other climes, that this delusive and visionary doctrine has flourished. There is in the habits[a] of the Hindus, and in the character of their religion, much which cherishes a mysterious spirit of holy abstraction; and we may approve of the conjecture, that India is the source whence other nations have derived the mystic worship of the divinity.

The general name which the Persian followers of this sect have adopted, is Soofee[a]; a term implying pure: by this all who adopt this creed are known, from the revered teacher, who is followed by thousands of disciples, to the humblest derveish or fakeer, who travels about naked, begging alms to support him in a life of prayer voluntarily adopted[b].

[a] The same remark is applied by our ecclasiastical writers to Egypt; to which country they trace the mystic, the hermit, and the monk. These writers speak of the propensity to an austere life as a disease in Syria and Egypt.

[a] The Arabic term Soofee, which means "wise, pious," and is metaphorically used to denote a religious man, is supposed to be derived from *Saaf*, "pure, clean;" or *Suffâ*, which signifies "purity." Some have traced it to *Soof*, "wool," or "wool-bearing," in allusion to the coarse woollen garments usually worn by its teachers. These terms, however, are all from the Arabic, and the accounts we have of the Soofees are comparatively modern, being all subsequent to the conquest of Persia by the Caliph Omar. It is not very unlikely, therefore, that the name has been originally adopted from the Greek Σοφοι (Sophoi), wise men.

[b] A life of mendicity, which many adopt from motives of piety, is assumed by others whose fortunes are desperate, as a means of livelihood. It is related, that a man came to Mahomed, and exclaimed, "O prophet! I am poor!"—"Poverty is my glory," replied Mahomed. Another person came afterwards, and used exactly the same phrase: but Mahomed answered him, "Poverty causes men to blush in both worlds. You wonder," the prophet then said to his companions, "at the apparent inconsistency of my answers to two men seemingly of the same condition: but the first of these men is virtuous, and has abandoned the world from principle; the second fellow has no such merit; the world has abandoned him."—*Mujalis-ool-Moumenan.*

The Soofees represent themselves as devoted to the search of truth, and incessantly occupied in adoring the Almighty, an union with whom they desire with all the fervour of divine love. The Creator, according to their belief, is diffused over all his creation [c]. He exists every where, and in every thing. They compare the emanations of his essence or spirit to the rays of the sun; which, they conceive, are continually darted forth and reabsorbed. It is for this reabsorption into the divine essence, to which their immortal part belongs, that they continually sigh. They believe that the soul of man, and the principle of life which exists throughout all nature, are not from God, but of God; hence those doctrines which their adversaries have held to be the most profane, as establishing an equality of nature between the created and the Creator.

The Soofee doctrine teaches that there are four stages through which man must pass, before he can reach the highest, or that of divine beatitude; when, to use their own language, "his corporeal veil [d] will be removed, and his emancipated soul will mix again with the glorious essence from which it had been separated, but not divided." The first of these stages is that of humanity [e], which supposes the disciple to live in an obedience to the holy law [f], and an

[c] It is difficult to understand what the Soofees state as their opinion concerning matter. Some of them term the world *alum kheal*, i. e. "a world of delusion;" by which it is implied, that we are constantly, with regard to all *maddah*, or "matter," under an illusion of our senses, and that it exists only from the light of God, or the animating principle which enables us to see it and makes it visible; otherwise it is in itself nothing. "The creation," they say, "proceeded at once from the splendour of God, who poured his spirit on the universe as the general diffusion of light is poured over the earth by the rising sun; and as the absence of that luminary creates total darkness, so the partial or total absence of the divine splendour or light causes partial or general annihilation." They compare the creation in its relation to the Creator, to those small particles discernible in the rays of the sun, which are gone the moment it ceases to shine.—*Persian MS.*

[d] Purdâh Jusmâneâh.—*Persian MS.*

[e] Nâsoot.

[f] The Sherrâh.

observance of all the rites, customs, and precepts of the established religion; these being admitted to be useful in regulating the lives of the vulgar, and restraining within proper bounds such as cannot reach the heights of divine contemplation, and might be corrupted and misled by that very liberty of faith which enlightens and delights those of superior intellect or more fervent devotion[g]. The second stage, in which the disciple attains power or force[h], is termed the road[i], or path; and he who arrives at it, leaves that condition in which he is only admitted to admire and follow a teacher, and enters the pale of Soofeeism. He may now abandon all observance of religious forms and ceremonies, as he exchanges "practical for spiritual worship[k]:" but this stage cannot be obtained without great piety, virtue, and fortitude; for the mind cannot be trusted in the neglect of usages and rites, necessary to restrain it when weak, till it hath acquired strength from habits of mental devotion, grounded on a proper knowledge of its own dignity, and of the divine nature. The third stage is that of knowledge[l]; and the disciple who arrives at it is deemed to have attained supernatural knowledge; in other words, to be inspired: and he is supposed, when he reaches this state, to be equal to the angels. The fourth and last stage denotes his arrival at truth[m], which implies his complete union[n] with the Divinity.

[g] I have been greatly aided in this part of my subject by a MS. on the Soofees, delivered by Captain Graham to the Bombay Literary Society. There cannot be higher authority than this gentleman, who adds to great learning a singular knowledge of the opinions and usages of these remarkable oriental devotees.

[h] Jubroot.

[i] Turrekât.

[k] The term used to express practical worship is Jusmânee Amul, "the acts of the body." Spiritual worship is styled Roohânee Amul, "the acts of the soul."

[l] The Arabic term is Aruf, which signifies "having attained knowledge; scientific."

[m] Huckeekât.

[n] This junction is termed Wâsil, "joined, united."

The Soofees are divided into innumerable sects, as must be the case in a doctrine which may be termed the belief of the imagination. By enumerating a few of the most remarkable, the character of the whole will be understood: for though they differ in name and some minor usages, they all agree in the principal tenets; particularly in those which inculcate the absolute necessity of a blind submission to inspired teachers, and the possibility, through fervent piety and enthusiastic devotion, of attaining for the soul, even when the body inhabits the earth, a state of celestial beatitude.

Authors are divided, whether there were two or seven original sects among the Soofees: but a very learned writer[o], whose bigotry made him direct all his ability to explain and confute their doctrines, after enumerating the seven[p] supposed to be original, states his opinion, that but two are entitled to that distinction. These are called the Hulooleâh, or "the inspired," and the Itâhedeâh, or "the unionists." He deems the other five sects only branches from these two. The principle maintained by the Hulooleâh, or "the inspired," is, that God has entered or descended into them; and that the Divine Spirit enters into all who are devout and

[o] Aga Mahomed Ali, the late Mooshtahed, or high priest of Kermanshah. I was well acquainted with this learned Persian, who, when I was in Persia, in 1800, enjoyed the highest respect and confidence of the king. He was a man of considerable information; and there was nothing in his appearance or manners to indicate that violence and relentless zeal with which he some years afterwards persecuted the Soofees.

[p] Aga Mahomed Ali observes, that "the Soofees are divided into a great number of sects. Some affirm, that only four are original; the others being no more than branches from them. The first of these is the Hulooleâh, or 'the inspired by the Divinity.' The second is the Itâhedeâh, or 'the unionists.' The third is the Wâsâleâh, or 'the joined.' The fourth is Ashakeâh, or 'the lovers.' Some add two more. The fifth they term the Tulkeneâh, or 'the learned,' or 'the teachers;' and the sixth are the Zeerukeâh, or 'the penetrating.' Others have mentioned a seventh sect, whom they call Wâhdatteâh, or, 'the solitudinarians.'" He concludes by stating his belief, that there are only two original sects of Soofees, and that all the others are derivatives.

have an intelligent mind. The Itâhedeâh, or "unionists," believe that God is as one with every enlightened being[q]. They compare the Almighty to flame, and their souls to charcoal; and say, that as charcoal when it meets flame becomes flame, their immortal part, from its union with God, becomes God. It has been affirmed, the learned author states[r], that these two sects, now deemed original, are derived from a sect called Hermâneâh, who borrowed their tenets from the Sâbetteâh, or "ancient Sabians." "Impious men," he observes, "desiring to conceal from themselves the great error into which they had fallen, have tried to connect the doctrines of these sects with that of the twelve holy Imâms, to which they have not the slightest affinity: but the principal tenets of the Hulooleâh certainly approach the creed of the Nazarenes, who believe that the Spirit of God entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary; whence the doctrine of the divine nature of their prophet, Jesus."

The Wâhdatteâh[s], or "the solitudinarians[t]," whom this author terms a branch of the Itâhedeâh[u], are considered by many other writers one of the original sects of Soofees. They believe that God is in every thing, and every thing is God. This class of Soofees are deemed followers of the ancient philosophers of Greece, particularly of Plato, who, they assert, has said, "that the God of the world has

[q] Aga Mahomed Ali's Letter.

[r] "This is affirmed," Aga Mahomed Ali says, "by the author of the Beân-ood-deen, or 'expounder of religions.'"

[s] In a work written by the late Shânâvâz Khan of Delhi, I find a very full account of the first peers or saints of the Soofees. He mentions Abdool *Wâhid*, the son of Zyd, as the founder of a great sect; and it is not improbable that the sect of *Wâhdatteâh* derive their name from him.

[t] The Arabic term Wahid, from which this name is derived, also means singular, incomprehensible.

[u] Aga Mahomed Ali states, that "this sect were not known in the time of the celebrated Soofee teachers, Bayezeed and Helâj:" but his comment to prove this only shows, that the tenets they now openly declare were then held in secret, and were deemed mysteries; for he states, that "Helâj, when he declared himself a god, was not blamed by them for being blasphemous, but for being a revealer of secrets."

created all things with his own breath[x], and that every thing, therefore, is both the Creator and the created." The tenets of the Wâdhatteâh are very prevalent among the modern Soofees; and many sects deem themselves branches of this stock. The author, hitherto followed, enumerates twenty[y] that follow the Wâdhatteâh, each of which has

[x] The Persian word for breath is *nufs*: as applied to man, it is deemed the human part of animation, and is quite distinct from Rooh, "the soul, or the immortal part."

[y] These are,

1st. The Dheri, or "the eternals," who are described in the text.

2d. The Wâsâleâh, or "those who have mixed or joined with God."

3d. The Hubbeebeâh, or "the friends," who, from having attained the friendship of God, claim exemption from all the forms observed by other men.

4th. The Wulleeâh, or "the holy favorites, who are described in the text."

5th. The Mushârukeâh, (also called Afzuleâh,) or "the companions."

6th. The Shemrâkeâh, which means in one sense, "liberal," in another, "a cluster of dates." They are supposed to be derived from the Khârijâh, or "the separatists." This sect are accused of being great sensualists.

7th. The Mâhâbeâh, or "the revered." This sect are said to maintain the community of property and of women.

8th. The Mullâmetteah, or "the reproached." Aga Mahomed Ali observes, when speaking of this sect, "Many Soofees maintain the doctrine of necessity, which confounds all virtue and vice: but this sect proceed further, and give a preference to what the world call vice; hence their name of "the reproached." But it is probable that this name is only given to them by their enemies.

9th. The Hâleâh, or "persons in a proper state;" or, as it might be translated, "the good state." This sect maintain, that the clapping of hands, dancing, and singing, to which they are accustomed, are involuntary. They affirm that, when they are in these fits, God comes to them and tells them secrets. "They lay their heads," they say, "in his bosom, and he lays his head on theirs. It is the stirring of the divine nature," they assert, "which leads to their dancing, and to all their extravagant joy."

10th. The Houreâh; so called, because they assert, that, when they dance till they fall down insensible, they enjoy the society of the houries, or nymphs of paradise; and these delightful mistresses, they say, tell them of mysteries.

11th. The Wâkuffeâh, or "the knowing;" so called from asserting that none but themselves know God. Reason, they say, can never lead to that knowledge: it must be attained through the aid of a holy teacher.

some difference in the subordinate parts of their belief and their usages. Among the most remarkable are the Dheri, or "eternals," who believe the world is uncreated and indissoluble; and conceive that a man is taught his duty by a mysterious priesthood, whose numbers and ranks are fixed, and who rise in gradation from the lowest paths to the sublimest height of divine knowledge: the Wulleâh, or "holy favourites," whose teachers claim a share in the attributes of the Almighty, and assert, that they have power to raise the

12th. The Tusleemâh, or "the obedient;" a name given from their profession of a blind and devoted obedience to the commands, whatever they may be, of their teacher. When they are proved faithful, they receive a small chain or string, called the Reshtâh Tusleem, "the string of obedience," from their teacher. Aga Mahomed Ali states, "that the sects of Ursulleâh and Kullundereâh have a usage."

13th. The Tulkeeneâh, or the Nezereâh; that is, "the teachers or the observers." They maintain, that to read any book, except one written by a Soofee, is unlawful: but even from these nothing can be learnt without the aid of a holy teacher: such, however, when initiated, can give the disciple more knowledge in one hour, than a moollah could in seventy years. Faith, they say, is *not created;* which, in one meaning, signifies "*faith is God.*" The followers of this sect are generally dressed in khirkâh, or patched garments," and wear a felt cap. They contemn worldly knowledge, and pretend to mysteries, in which they are instructed by a preparatory fast, hardly tasting food, and remaining in complete solitude.

14th. The Kummâleâh, or "the perfect," described in the text.

15th. The Khâmeâh, or "the inspired," described by Aga Mahomed as a sect of Epicureans, who seek nothing but the enjoyment of the present hour, and are said not even to believe in a future state.

16th. The Nooreân, or "the enlightened;" so termed from their professed attachment to Noor, "light, or virtue," and their horror at Nâr, "fire," which is with them the symbol of vice.

17th. The Bâtteneâh, or "the mysterious." This sect, Aga Mahomed states, deem madmen holy, and term them, "the abstracted."

18th. The Joudeâh, or "the thirsty." This sect are accused of delighting in fables and allegories, of wearing silk and embroidered garments, and of indulging in sensual gratification.

19th. The Ashakeâh, or "the lovers." The severe writer, who gives this account of the Soofees, says, that "the Ashakeâh profess themselves ardent lovers of God; but they continually address the fairest part of the creation with a favorite sentence, *that worldly love is the bridge over which, those must pass who seek the joys of divine love.*"

20th. The Jumkhooreâh, or "the collected," are described in the text.

dead or to kill the living; and who, pretending to imitate that God of whom they declare themselves a part, have neither wife nor dwelling. The Mushârukeâh, or "companions," who assert, that they are greater than the prophet, because they hold direct communion with God; the Hâleâh, or those who have reached "the good state," are distinguished by their singing and clapping of hands, and by their falling into occasional trances, in which they pretend to visitations from the Almighty. The Kummâleâh, or "the perfect," reject all worldly occupation, except singing, dancing, and music; or, to use their own words, "those pursuits in which the soul takes delight." "This sect," the author who describes them observes, "even sing their prayers." The Nooreân, or "the enlightened," teach, that men's actions should neither proceed from the fear of punishment nor the hope of reward, but from innate love of virtue and detestation of vice: the twentieth and last branch of the Wâhdatteâh is denominated Jumkhooreâh [1], "the collected;" a name given them from their belief in the collected creeds of all the other sects. Their leading doctrine is, that nothing which exists should be rejected; for all things contain a portion of the Divinity. They are accused of being complete optimists: everything is good with them; religion and infidelity; the lawful and unlawful. "Like the Nazarenes," the author who gives this account observes, "they deem dogs and hogs clean animals; and, like them, admit that females may go about unveiled. The greater part of the modern Soofees [2] belong to this sect; and they dignify their indiscriminate belief and conduct with the exalted name of divine love."

[1] Jumkhooreâh, considered as a compound word, may be translated "the collected;" but jumkhoor signifies "hollow" (as a reed). If their name has this signification, it must have been given by their enemies.

[2] Aga Mahomed Ali states, that "there is another branch called Zerâkeâh, who "have formed a creed, like the Jumkhooreâh, from those of almost all the preceding Soofees."

The Mahomedan Soofees have endeavoured to connect their mystic faith with the doctrine of their prophet, who, they assert, was himself an accomplished Soofee; and they interpret[b] many verses in the Koran, and some of his traditionary sayings, so as to give themselves the benefit of his great name. The Persian followers of this sect deem Ali, his sons, and all the twelve Imâms, teachers of Soofeeism. They state, that Ali deputed his two sons and two other holy men to teach the mysteries of this faith; and from these many of the principal Khâlifâs, or teachers, who have founded sects, derive their title to the sacred mantle[c], which was the symbol of their spiritual power.

[b] They quote a tradition of the prophet, from which they state that their four stages to perfection are derived. Mahomed is asserted to have said, "That the law (canonical) is as a vessel; the road or path is as the sea; knowledge of divine things is as the shell; and knowledge of the Divinity is as the pearl: but he who desires to obtain the pearl, must first embark in the vessel."—Captain GRAHAM'S *MS. on the Soofees.*

[c] It appears, that though the khirkâ or mantle was in general only transferred to a beloved pupil at the death of his master, some superior saints possessed a power, even while living, to invest others with this sacred and mysterious garment. Shahnâvâz Khan informs us, in his Essay (the Moorut Aftâb Nameh) on this sect, that four persons were empowered by Ali to disseminate the doctrines of the Soofees. These were his two sons, the Imâms Hoossein and Hussun, and two learned men, Hoossein of Bussorah, and Kummyl the son of Zeât. Hoossein of Bussorah was succeeded by Abd-ool Wâhid, the son of Zyd, and Hubbeeb-e-Ajumee, or Hubbeeb of Persia. The following five sects of fakeers, according to this writer, are derived from Abd-ool Wâhid.

1. The Zydeân, who devote themselves to remain in deserts, and never enter towns or villages. They live entirely on vegetables and roots, holding the slaughter of any animal that has life to be unlawful.

2d. The Albâzeân take their name from Albâz, a Khâlifâ or teacher who was invested with the mantle by Abd-ool Wâhid. They affect solitude, and have neither wives nor children. They profess not to solicit alms but to spend freely what comes unsolicited.

3d. The Adhumeân trace their origin to the famous Sultan Ibrahim Adhum, who resigned the royal dignity to become a mendicant. They are always travelling, and are companionless. This sect continually move their lips in devotion.

4th. The Bâhâreeân, from Bâhâree of Bussorah, who derives his mantle

The dignity of Khâlifâ can only be attained by long fasting and prayer, and by complete abstraction from all worldly pursuits. The man must die before the saint can be born. The preparation for the third class of Soofeeism,

through two descents of Sultan Ibrahim Adhum. This sect are very reserved and practise abstinence.

5th. The Khaujah Isaak. Their Khâlifâ was Khaujah Ulloo of Deenawar, who derives his mantle through two descents from Bâhâree of Bussorah. Their teacher avoided cities. He is said to have been of a very amorous disposition.

According to Shahnâvâz Khan, nine remarkable sects derive their origin from Hubbeeb-e-Ajumee.

1st. The Ajumeeân take their name from their founder. They chiefly dwell in mountains, are very abstemious, and wear no dress but what is barely sufficient to cover their nakedness. This sect attach themselves to animals and birds, with which they form friendships.

2d. The Tyfooreân take their name from Bayezeed of Bustâm, one of whose names was Tyfoor-Bayezeed. He was one of the most celebrated Soofees of Persia, and derived his mantle from Hubbeeb-e-Ajumee.

3d. The Kirkeeân derive their name from Mâroof of Kirkee, a favored disciple of the Imâm Rezâ, to whom he is said, in another MS., to have been a porter. Some of the most celebrated modern teachers pretend to derive their authority from this saint.

4th. The Sâkettee (this word means a metal-seller; saket signifies metal) derive their name from Seree Sâket, a disciple of Mâroof.

5th. Junydeân take their name from Shaikh Junyd of Bagdad, a Khâlifâ or teacher of celebrity, who received his mantle from Seree Sâket.

6th. Kazerooneân. This sect has its name from Aboo Isaak, of Kazeroon, who derives his mantle through two descents from Shaikh Junyd.

7th. Tooseeân take their name from Allah-u-deen, of Toos, who after five intermediate gradations or descents, (the term in the original is *Punj-Wâsâttâh*,) inherited the mantle of Shaikh Junyd.

8th. Sohrâverdeeâns, who take their name from Aboo Nujub of Sohrâverdee, who through five descents derived his mantle from Hubbeeb-e-Ajumee.

9th. Ferdosiân, who take their name from Nijum-u-deen Ferdosi, the Khâlifâ or teacher of Aboo-Nujub of Sohrâverdee.

The same author gives a long list of other sects derivative from the above; the Khâlifâs or holy teachers of every one have, or pretend to have, a hereditary right to their mantle from some holy saint: among these a sect of fakeers called the Suffaveans trace themselves to Shaik Suffee-u-deen (the ancestor of the Suffavean Monarchs of Persia) of Ardebil, who, he observes, derived his mantle through some gradations from Shaikh Junyd of Bagdad.

which elevates to the rank and knowledge of angels, requires a long and awful probation. 'Great numbers perish in their efforts to reach it. The person making the attempt must be a holy mooreed or disciple, who, by devotion and abstraction, has already advanced beyond the necessity of the common usages and forms of religion. He must commence his endeavour to attain a state of higher beatitude by a long fast, which some sects conceive should not be less than forty days. During this fast he remains in solitude, and in a contemplative posture; and receives no sustenance but what is necessary to preserve life. On the patience and fortitude which he displays during this severe test, his character greatly depends: but when the skeleton (for such, after this fast, the disciple always appears) walks forth, he has still many years of trial to endure. He must either wander over deserts, or remain companionless in some frightful solitude, occasionally seeing the Khâlifâ or teacher to whom he is attached; for the chief merit of Soofees, through all their ranks, is devotion to their spiritual leader. When the Khâlifâ dies he bequeaths his patched garment, all his worldly wealth, to the disciple whom he esteems the most worthy to be his successor; and the moment the latter puts on the holy mantle, he is vested with the power of his master.

The Persian Soofees, though they have borrowed much of their belief and many of their usages from India, have not adopted, as a means of attaining beatitude, the dreadful austerities common among the visionary devotees of the Hindoos. Practices so abhorrent to nature required for their support all the influence of ignorance and superstition over the human mind. The most celebrated Soofee teachers in Persia have been men as famed for their knowledge as their devotion. In the list of these, modern Soofees desire to include every name which has obtained pre-eminence in the history of their country, or in the world[d]. They claim

[d] The Mahomedan Soofees claim the Patriarch Abraham as one of their principal teachers. "That holy man," they say, "turned day into night,

all who by their writings or sayings have shown a spirit of philosophy, or a knowledge of the divine nature, which elevated them above the prejudices of the vulgar. But though many of the wisest and ablest men of Persia have been remarkable for their attachment to the forms and dogmas of the established worship, the Soofees can boast that great numbers eminent for their learning and genius have adopted their opinions. Among these the most distinguished are poets. The progress of improvement is the same in all nations. The first ray of light that illumines a dark and barbarous age, emanates from the poet, whose page long continues to be that which is chiefly, if not solely, admired. The natives of Persia are enthusiastically devoted to poetry: the meanest artisan of the principal cities[e] can read or repeat some of the finest passages from their most admired writers; even the rude and unlettered soldier leaves his tent, to listen with rapture to the strain of the minstrel who sings a mystic song of divine love, or recites the tale of a battle of his forefathers. The very essence of Soofeism is poetry. The raptures of genius expatiating on a subject that can never be exhausted, are deemed holy inspirations by those who believe that the emancipated soul can wander at large in the regions of imagination, and even unite with its Creator. The Musnavi[f], which teaches, in the sweetest strains, that all nature abounds with a divine[g] love, causing even the lowest plant

and night into day, by his constant and undivided adoration of the most high God."—*Persian MS.*

[e] I was struck with this during my residence in Persia. Several of my servants were well acquainted with the poetry of their country; and when I was at Isfahan in 1800, I was surprised to hear a common tailor, at work repairing one of my tents, entertain his companions with repeating some of the finest mystical odes of Háfiz.

[f] This celebrated work was written by Shaikh Jellal-ood-deen, usually called the Moollah of Room.

[g] Sir William Jones has translated a passage from the Musnavi, which will fully illustrate this observation: "Hear

to seek the sublime object of its desire; the works of the celebrated Jâmi, which breathe in every line the most ecstatic raptures; the book of moral lessons of the eloquent Sadi, and the lyric and mystic odes of Hâfiz, may be termed the scriptures of the Soofees[h] of Persia. To them

"Hear how yon reed, in sadly-pleasing tales,
Departed bliss and present wo bewails!
With me, from native banks untimely torn,
Love-warbling youths and soft-ey'd virgins mourn.
O! let the heart by fatal absence rent,
Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament:
Who roams in exile from his parent bow'r,
Pants to return, and chides each ling'ring hour.
My notes, in circles of the grave and gay,
Have hail'd the rising, cheer'd the closing day:
Each in my fond affections claim d a part,
But none discern'd the secret of my heart.
What though my strains and sorrows slow combin'd!
Yet ears are slow, and carnal eyes are blind.
Free through each mortal form the spirits roll,
But sighs avail not. Can we see the soul?

Such notes breath'd gently from yon vocal frame:
Breath'd, said I? no; 'twas all enliv'ning flame.
'Tis love, that fills the reed with warmth divine;
'Tis love, that sparkles in the racy wine.
Me, plaintive wand'rer from my peerless maid,
The reed has fir'd, and all my soul betray'd.
He gives the bane, and he with balsam cures;
Afflicts, yet sooths; impassions, yet allures.

Hail, heav'nly love! true source of endless gains!
Thy balm restores me; and thy skill sustains.
Oh, more than Galen learn'd, than Plato wise!
My guide, my law, my joy supreme, arise!
Love warms this frigid clay with mystic fire,
And dancing mountains leap with young desire.
Blest is the soul, that swims in seas of love,
And long the life sustain'd by food above.
With forms imperfect can perfection dwell?
Here pause, my song; and thou, vain world, farewell."

Sir William Jones's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 458.

[h] The names of Sâhibi, Oorfee, Rudiki, and many others, might be added.

they continually refer; and the gravest writers who have defended their doctrine, take their proofs from these and other poets, whom they deem inspired by their holy theme.

The Soofee tenets, as may be supposed from what has been said, are involved in mystery: they commence in doctrines of general piety and virtue, and inculcate forbearance, abstemiousness, and universal benevolence. This is their profession; but they have secrets and mysteries for every gradation, which are never revealed to the profane. Munsoor Helâj, one of their most eminent spiritual leaders, who, they believe, had attained the fourth or last stage of Soofeeism, proclaimed, "I am the truth;" or, in other words, "I am God [i]." The constant repetition of this impious phrase alarmed the orthodox priests, and he was seized and empaled. An inspired Soofee is said to have demanded of the Almighty why he permitted Munsoor to suffer? The reply was, "This is the punishment for the revealer of secrets [k]." Among the many fables related of this holy person, one marks the manner in which they desire to reconcile their doctrines with the faith of Mahomed. When Munsoor Helâj was carried to the stake, the executioners could not perform their duty: in vain they endeavoured to seize him; his body eluded their grasp, and appeared seated in a composed posture in the air at some distance from the stake [l]. While this was occurring on earth, his soul sought the regions of paradise. He was accosted by Mahomed, who admitted that he had arrived at the stage of

[i] Many fables have been invented to account for the imprudence of this wise teacher. One of these states, that he observed his sister go out every evening: he followed her; having seen her communicate with the houries, and receive from these celestial nymphs a cup of nectar, he insisted on drinking one or two drops that remained of this celestial liquor. His sister told him he could not contain it, and that it would cause his death. He persisted; from the moment that he swallowed it he kept exclaiming, *An-ool-huk!* that is, "I am the truth!" till he was put to death.

[k] Persian MS.

[l] Captain Graham's MS.

Wâssilâh or "union," and that his saying, he was God, was truth; but he entreated him for the sake of practical religion, which was necessary to keep men within proper limits, to permit himself to be empaled. The soul of the holy man, convinced by what the prophet said, returned to earth to reanimate his body, and endured the death to which he had been sentenced.

The principal fables of the Soofees relate to those of their sect who have suffered martyrdom. Of these one of the most celebrated is Shems Tubreezee, who was sentenced to be flayed alive [m], on account of his having raised a dead person to life. We are told that, after the law had been put in force, he wandered about, carrying his own skin, and solicited some food to appease his hunger: but he had been excommunicated as well as flayed, and no one would give him the slightest help. After four days he found a dead ox: but he could not obtain fire to dress it. Wearied out with the unkindness of men, he desired the sun to broil his meat. It descended to perform the office; and the world was on the point of being consumed, when the holy Shaikh commanded the flaming orb to resume its station in the heavens [n]. The general belief in these monstrous fables as to the divine nature of their spiritual leaders, is a just subject of reproach against the whole body of Soofees. They are also accused by orthodox Mahomedans of having no fixed faith, but of professing a respect they do not feel for religion, that they may smooth the path of those whom they desire to delude; of pretending to revere the prophet and the Imâms, yet conceiving themselves above the forms and usages which these holy personages not only observed, but deemed of divine institution.

Though predestination appears to be inculcated by the Koran, few orthodox Mahomedans give a literal construc-

[m] Captain Graham's MS.
[n] Ibid.

tion to the words of their prophet on this subject. Indeed they deem it profane to do so, as it would make God the author of man's guilt: but almost all the Soofees are predestinarians. They believe that the principle which emanates from God, can do nothing without his will, and can refrain from nothing that he wills. Some of them deny the existence of evil, because every thing proceeds from God, and therefore must be good. The Soofees of this class exclaim with the poet, "The writer of our destiny is a fair writer, and never wrote that which was bad." While those who admit that there is evil in this world, but contend that man is not a free agent, repeat from Hâfiz, "My destiny has been thrown into a tavern [o] by the Almighty. In this case, tell me, O teacher! where is my crime?"

The Soofees, we are told by one of their most violent and able enemies, deem every thing in the world a type of the beauty and power of the Divinity: but, he adds, it appears from both their actions and writings, that it is in the red cheeks of beautiful damsels that they contemplate his beauty; and in the impious daring of Nimrod and of Pharaoh, that they see and admire his power. A celebrated Soofee teacher [p], he observes, has written, "That the secret of the soul was first revealed when Pharaoh declared himself a god:" and another [q] has said, "The host of Pharaoh were not lost in the sea of error, but of knowledge:" and has asserted in the same page, "that the Nazarenes are not infidels because they deem Jesus a God, but because they deem him alone a God." The Soofees are stated by the author [r] so often quoted, to deny the

[o] Tavern is undoubtedly used here to signify the sinful world.

[p] Sahel-ebn-Abdûllâh, of Shuster.

[q] Shaikh Mohee-u-deen. This assertion is to be found in the work of this great Soofee teacher.

[r] Aga Mahomed Ali.

doctrine of reward and punishment; which is as incompatible with their ideas of the re-absorption of the soul into the divine essence, as with their literal belief of predestination. But they do not admit the truth of this assertion; and some of their most celebrated teachers, who have revolted at a literal interpretation of the Koran, have maintained that sinners will be punished, and that the good will enjoy a higher and purer bliss than can be found in a sensual paradise. While others, more visionary, believe that the imagination will have as great a power in the other world as in this, and that the punishment of hell will consist in a delusion. Men, they say, will see a fire which they will conceive is to burn them; but which, when it reaches them, will prove cold. One writer[s] of this sect goes so far as to assert, that those who are condemned to hell, will soon, from the habit of living there, not only be reconciled to its heat, but deem it a blessing, and look with disgust on the joys of paradise[t].

The Soofees are accused of seeking to delude the Persians into their tenets by the most extravagant praises of their favorite Ali; who, according to them, was acquainted with all the mysteries of their doctrine[u]: whereas they are equal admirers of the three first caliphs when with Soonees, on the same principle that leads them to be in raptures with Ali when with Sheahs: but the fact is, Aga Ma-

[s] Kysuree.

[t] This author, according to Aga Mahomed Ali, says, that a sinner in hell will in a short time be like a beetle in the midst of dung, which, delighted with its unclean mansion, abhors all sweet scents.

[u] The poet Jellal-ood-deen makes Ali, when he is wounded by an assassin, declare, "I am the lord of the country, but with my body I have no concern. You have not struck me; you are a mere instrument of Providence; and who shall pretend to revenge himself on Providence? Be not grieved therefore at what you have done, for to-morrow I am your advocate!" Aga Mahomed Ali after this quotation, asks "To what does such doctrine lead? To the most infamous sinners attaining the reward of the just in paradise."

homed adds, "they are in general complete unbelievers; and it is easy for men to conform to every faith who believe in none[x]." In his account of the different sects of Soofees he states a number of facts, to shew the extravagant blasphemy of the teachers, and the blind credulity of their followers. "A Soofee[y]," he says, "has told us, that one day, when he was intoxicated, he saw God, in the figure of a man, with a coat on, his hair plaited, and his cap cocked on one side. 'I struck him on the shoulder,' this Soofee writes, 'and exclaimed, By the truth of thy unity I know thee; and if thou assumest a hundred shapes, it will not conceal thee from my sight!' This is one of those impious madmen whom fools have worshipped as a saint." The spiritual leaders of the Soofees, the same author states, are not only believed to perform miracles, but to live in continual communion with God; one of the most celebrated of them, whose life, with all the fables[z] attached to it, is a

[x] Aga Mahomed Ali quotes an Arabic sentence, which, he says, is often repeated by their writers. Literally it means, "a Soofee knows no religion;" but they interpret it, "a Soofee thinks ill of no religion:" in other words, having none themselves, they treat all with equal favour and consideration.

[y] Shaikh Rozabahar Tursee, a teacher of the Wâdhatteâh, or "Unionists." He is the author of a work entitled the Tufseer-ul-Aserâr, or "Commentary on mysteries," in which the passage is to be found.

[z] In one of my Persian manuscripts on the Soofees, is the following curious account of Shaikh Mohyudeen Abd-ool Kauder, of Ghilan, who was born A. H. 471, and died in 561.

His mother declared, that when he was at the breast he never tasted milk during the holy month of Ramzan: and in one of his works he gives the following account of himself. "The day before the feast of Araf, I went out into the fields and laid hold on the tail of a cow, which turned round and exclaimed: 'Oh Abd-ool Kauder, am I not that which thou hast created me?' I returned home and went up to the terrace of my house: I saw all the pilgrims standing at the mountain of Arâfât at Mecca. I went and told my mother I must devote myself to God: I wished to proceed to Bagdad to obtain knowledge. I informed her what I had seen, and she wept: then taking out eighty deenars, she told me that, as I had a brother, half of that was all my inheritance. She made me swear, when

favorite theme with his sect, is said to have ascended corporeally to heaven seventy times every night: and the

she gave it to me, never to tell a lie; and afterwards bade me farewell, exclaiming, 'Go, my son, I give thee to God. We shall not meet again until the day of judgement!' I went on well till I came near to Hamadan, when our Kâfilâh was plundered by sixty horsemen. One fellow asked me what I had got? 'Forty deenars,' I said, 'are sewed under my garment.' The fellow laughed, thinking, no doubt, I was joking him. 'What have you got?' said another. I gave him the same answer. When they were dividing the spoil, I was called to an eminence where their chief stood. 'What property have you, my little fellow?' said he. 'I have told two of your people already,' I replied; 'I have forty deenars sewed up carefully in my clothes.' He desired them to be ript open, and found my money. 'And how came you,' said he with surprise, 'to declare so openly what has been so carefully hidden?'—'Because,' I replied, 'I will not be false to my mother, to whom I have promised that I will never conceal the truth.'—'Child,' said the robber, 'hast thou such a sense of thy duty to thy mother at thy years; and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to my God? Give me thy hand, innocent boy,' he continued, 'that I may swear repentance upon it.' He did so. His followers were all alike struck with the scene. 'You have been our leader in guilt,' said they to their chief, 'be the same in the path of virtue:' and instantly at his order they made restitution of their spoil, and vowed repentance on my hand."

Mohy-u-deen arrived at Bagdad in A. H. 488, and consequently when this event happened, must have been sixteen or seventeen years of age. His learning and virtue are spoken of with rapture. According to the author I write from, God granted all his requests; and the Divine vengeance fell on those he hated. In A. H. 521 he began his public lectures. High Soonee authorities of the sect of Shaffei report many of his miracles. He himself gives the following account of his fasting, previous to his becoming a disciple of his teacher. "I was eleven years in a *burj* (tower,) and when there I declared to God I would not eat or drink till some one caused me to do so. I remained forty days; after which a person brought a little meat, put it before me, and went away: my life was nearly springing out at the sight of the victuals, but I refrained: and I heard a voice from within me call out, 'I am hungry, I am hungry;' at that moment Shaikh Aboo Syud Mukzoomee (a celebrated Soofee) passed, and hearing the voice exclaimed: 'What is that?'—'It is my mortal part,' I replied; 'but the soul is yet firm and awaits the result.'—'Come to my house,' he said; and went away. I resolved however to fulfil my vow, and remained where I was: but Elias came and told me to follow the Syud, whom I found at his door waiting. 'You would not comply with my wish,' said he, 'till it was enforced by Elias.' After this he gave me meat and drink in plenty, and then invested me with a khirkâ, (or sacred mantle,) and I became his confirmed friend and companion."

Moollah of Room, Jellal-ood-deen, whose poems they deem inspired, was, they believe, taken up into heaven when only six years of age.

Aga Mahomed Ali treats every Soofee sect with a severity that must detract from the credit due to his extensive knowledge. There is no doubt that many of the most eminent Soofees have been men of piety and learning, whose self-denial and wisdom have attracted a fame which they did not seek [a]: while others have clothed themselves in humility, to attain greatness, and have fled from observation only to attract it. There is no path to fame and power, however unseemly and rugged, on which man will not enter; the same passions which excite the worldly votary of ambition to the attainment of royal robes and a sceptre, fill the breast of the mendicant devotee, striving for the holy staff and sacred mantle that are to vest him with power over the minds of the multitude. It has been truly observed, the greatest objection to Soofeeism is, that in itself it is no religion: wherever it prevails, it unsettles the existing belief; but it substitutes no other of a definite and intelligible nature. Though it professes to leave the mass of the people in the state it found them in, it never can. They are taught to consider an attention to the forms of religion as a mere worldly duty, from which they are to be emancipated by an increase of knowledge or devotion. No attack can be more insidious, or more likely to be effectual. It is to praise the beauty and utility of an edifice, that leisure may be given to sap its foundations. The Soofee teacher does not deny the mission of Mahomed: but while he instructs his disciples to consider that prophet and his successors as instruments for preserving the order and good

[a] The author of the Ayeen Akberry relates, that Wyss Kerânee, a Soofee who had given up the world, used to say to such as sought him, "Do you seek God? If you do, why do you come to me? And if you do not seek God, what business can I have with you?"

government of the world, he boasts a direct and familiar intercourse with the Deity; and on that ground claims their entire confidence and obedience in all that regards their spiritual interests.

A Persian author [b] of very high reputation for his piety and judgement has given an excellent account of the Soofees and their doctrine. Like many other writers of equal authority, he conceives some of the principal Mahomedan saints to have been Soofees: but, when he applies the term to them, he obviously means no more than religious enthusiasts: and he throughout makes a wide distinction between those who, while they mortified the flesh and indulged in an enraptured love of the Deity, still kept within the pale of revealed religion: and the wild devotee who, abandoning himself to the wanderings of a heated imagination, fancied he should draw nearer to God by departing from everything deemed rational among men.

"The Almighty," this author writes, "after his prophets and holy teachers, esteems none more than the pure Soofees; because their desire is, to raise themselves through his grace from their earthly mansion to the heavenly regions, and to exchange their lowly condition for that of angels. I have stated what I know of them in my preface [c]. The accomplished and eloquent amongst them form two classes, the Hookâmâh, or *men of science*, and the Oulamâh, or *men of piety and learning*. The former seek truth by demonstration: the latter through revelation. There is another class

[b] Cauzee Noorollâ of Shuster in the Mojalis-ul-Momineen, a treatise on the Sheah faith.

[c] "The Soofees (he there says) are of two classes: those who desire human knowledge, and pursue it in the accustomed way, observing the common ordinances of religion, are called Mootâ-kullum (*advocates or observers*): those who practise austerities and strive to purify their souls, are called Soofees." This word literally means *pure, clean*. The celebrated Moollah of Room has the following play upon it in one of his lines. *Soofee nâ shewud sâfee tâ dir nâ râseed jâmee*: the Soofee will not be pure till he takes one cup. This is said to have a mystical meaning.

called Arufâh or *men of knowledge*, and *Ouledh* or holy men, who in endeavouring to reach a state of beatitude have abandoned the world. These are also *men of science*; but, as through divine grace they have attained to a state of perfection, their fears are believed to be less than those of others who remain in worldly occupations [d]. Thus they are more exalted, and nearer to the rich inheritance of the prophet than other men [e]. No doubt there are imminent dangers along the path; there are many false teachers and many deluded students pursuing the vapour of the desert, like the thirsty traveller; and these, if they do not rush into their death, return wearied, grieved, and disappointed, from having been the dupes of their fancy. A true and perfect teacher is most rare; and when he exists, to discover him is impossible; for who shall discover perfection, except he that is perfect; who shall tell the price of the jewel, but the jeweller? This is the reason why so many miss the true path and fall into all the mazes of error. They are deceived by appearances, and waste their lives in the pursuit of that which is most defective; conceiving all along that it is most perfect; and thus lose their time, their virtue, and their religion. It is to save men from this danger that God, through the prophet, has warned us to attend to established usages, and to be guided by care and prudence. What has been said," this sensible writer observes, "applies equally to those who live in the world, and to those who have abandoned it; for neither abstinence nor devotion can exclude the devil, who will seek retired mendicants, clothed in the garb of divinity; and these, like

[d] The disciple of a celebrated Soofee, having some money in his pocket when travelling, expressed his fears. *Cast away thy fear*, said the old man. *How can I cast away a feeling?* he replied. *By casting away what excites it:* was the answer. He threw away his money, and having nothing to lose, felt no fear. Persian MS.

[e] Shaikh Ab-ool-Senna, or Avicenna (the author says), has given the same account of the Soofees in his Mukâmât-ool-Arâfyn.

other men, will discover that real knowledge is the only talisman by which the dictates of the good can be distinguished from those of the evil spirit. The traveller on the path of Soofeeism must not therefore be destitute of worldly knowledge; otherwise he will be alike exposed to danger from excess or deficiency of zeal; and he will certainly act contrary to the most sacred of his duties. A senseless man is likely to exceed the just bounds in the practice of abstinence and abstraction, and then both his bodily and mental frame become affected, and he loses his labour and his object. It is to men of this description that the prophet adverts, when he says, 'God will not accept the irrational devotee:' and again, when he exclaims, 'My back has been broken by pious fools, and useless learned men.'"

This writer, after some remarks on the affinity between virtuous Sheahs and Soofees, observes, "that many of the latter have disguised their real sentiments from their alarm at persecuting tyrants; and have given general answers, and pretended to be of no particular faith, to escape the effects of that fury which was pointed at the Sheahs. The consequence of this conduct has been, that they have subjected themselves to the reproach of having no religion at all: and, for the reasons I have stated, it has become a tenet among Soofees not to confess their religion. It is indeed considered among them a crime of the deepest turpitude to do so.

"The Soofee teacher," (according to Cauzee Noor-ôlla,) "professes to instruct his disciple how to restore the inward man by purifying the spirit, cleansing the heart, enlightening the head, and anointing the soul: and when all this is done, they affirm that his desires shall be accomplished, and his depraved qualities changed into higher attributes[f], and he shall prove and understand the conditions, the revela-

[f] Or qualities: the same word Akhlâk is repeated.

tions, the stages[g] and gradations of exaltation, till he arrives at the ineffable enjoyment of beholding and contemplating God. If teachers have not arrived at this consummation of perfection themselves, it is obvious that to seek knowledge or happiness from them is a waste of time; and the devoted disciple will either terminate his labours in assuming the same character of imposture that he has found in his instructor[h], or he will consider all Soofees alike, and condemn this whole sect of philosophers[i]. It often happens, that sensible and well-informed men follow a master who, though able, has not arrived at that virtue and sanctity which constitute perfection: his disciples conceiving that none are better or more holy than their teacher and themselves, and yet disappointed at not reaching that

[g] We are informed by Ferishta, an Indian Mahomedan author of celebrity, that the degrees of the saints among these religious men are four, which he donominates, *sogrâ*, "the least;" *wâsittâh*, "the middle or great;" *kubrâ*, "the greater;" and *usmâh*, "the greatest." Every Soofee should attain *diâtte*, "the beginning;" *wâsittâh*, "the middle;" and *nehâitte*, "the end." The holy men of these descriptions in this world are never less than three hundred and fifty-six persons, who are always employed in aiding others and curing souls. The principal Soofees believe that three hundred of this number are *abtâl*, "erroneous or false;" forty *abdâl*, "pious men;" seven *asiâh*, "running waters;" five *âutâd*, "props;" three *kutb*, "poles;" and one *kutb-ool-âctâb*, or "the pole of poles." When any one of these persons dies he is succeeded by another of the rank below him, and so on in regular succession: for instance, if the pole of poles dies, one of the poles fills his place, and so on, till one of the people is brought into the rank of *abtâl*, or "erroneous." Among the three hundred and fifty-six persons nine only are deemed qualified to delegate or invest others with authority as teachers; these nine consist of the *kutb-ool-âctâb*, "the pole of poles;" the three *kutbs* or "poles;" and five *âutâd* or "props;" and these nine alone can be deemed perfect teachers.

[h] Shaikh is the word generally applied to the principal teachers among the Soofees, and is always used by this author to describe them.

[i] Philosoof, which signifies a philosopher, is a word in common use in Persia. It was formerly, they state, applied to Plato and others, who are now known under the more dignified name of Hookâmâh, "or men of science." Impostors in philosophy appear in the East to have degraded the term of *philosoof*, which in the idiom of the present day signifies a master in deceit and art.

state of enjoyment which they expected to arrive at, seek relief from the reproaches of their own mind in scepticism. They doubt, on the ground of their personal experience, all they have heard or read, and believe that the accounts of the holy men who have in this world attained a state of beatitude are only a string of fables. This our author remarks is a dangerous error; and I must therefore repeat, that those who seek truth should be most careful to commence with prudence and moderation, lest they be lost in the mazes I have described; and, from meeting with evils of their own creation, should give way to disappointment and grief; and, by expelling from their minds that ardent fervour which belongs to true zeal, should disqualify themselves for the most glorious of all human pursuits."

The progress of Soofeeism has of late been very rapid in Persia. Its tenets were mixed with those of the Sheahs, when the latter was established as the national faith by the first Seffavean king; and some monarchs of that race gloried in professing tenets which they inherited from their pious ancestor Shaikh Hyder [k], one of the most celebrated Soofee teachers in Persia. The orthodox hierarchy of Persia have from the first made an open and violent war on this sect; and though they have often failed to rouse the bigotry of the sovereign in their defence, they have always succeeded in convincing him that the established religion was necessary to the support of the state, and that nothing could be more dangerous than the progress of infidelity, which, by unsettling men's minds, was calculated to throw them into doubt and ferment. The principal Soofee teachers, they admitted, might act from different motives: some might be

[k] Kempfer mentions a book called the Kârâ-jild, or "black volume," which the Seffavean monarchs inherited from their pious ancestors. This mysterious legacy was not to be opened till the kingdom was in imminent danger of ruin; and it was supposed to contain counsel and prophecies that would be useful in this extremity. I have never met with an account of it in any Persian author.

the dupes of their own imagination, while others sought only to delude their followers: but the tenets and rhapsodies of all tended to the same point; they desired first to abolish the forms of religion, that they might with more ease destroy the substance; in their own contemplation they allowed no name, not even that of Mahomed, to come between them and their God; but with the very breath that uttered this sentence they desired to come between God and all other men. They endeavoured to destroy names to which men gave reverence, with no other object but that of substituting their own: for their first and fundamental tenet inculcated, that the profane or erring could not advance a step without a spiritual guide, and that their progress in the true path would be exactly in proportion to their confidence in their holy instructor. What was this but a desire to become the idols[l] of men's worship: it could be of little consequence to a country which their bigotry or their ambition had thrown into confusion, whether they were desirous of a heavenly or an earthly crown; whether they pulled down the fabric from the mere wish of destroying what they deemed bad, or with the object of building out of its ruins something which in their imagination appeared more beautiful. If they did not seek to excite commotion and rebellion, their doctrines threw the community into a state the most favorable for those who had such designs: and the history of Persia and of neighbouring nations abounded with examples of their successful efforts to obtain temporal power, through their spiritual character. Hussun Subah and his descendants were a race of Soofees[m]; and the implicit obedience their devoted fol-

[l] The Moorteza Shahee, a sect of Soofees, make an image of their teacher in clay, which the disciple keeps, to prevent him from wandering, and to bring him, through continual contemplation, to complete identity with his guide or saint.—*Persian MS.*

[m] Hussun Subah is said to have belonged to the Soofee sect of Bâtteneâh. The history of this chief and his descendants has been given, Vol. I. p. 241.

lowers had given to those mountain chiefs had for two centuries filled Persia with murders, and had made the proudest monarchs of that country and neighbouring empires tremble at their mysterious power. The history of Bayezeed, the founder of the Soofee sect of Rosheneâh [n], or "the enlightened," was not essentially different from that of Hussun Subah: and Bayezeed had established amid the mountains of Affghanistan a temporal power upon the authority of his spiritual character, which enabled him and his successors to disturb the tranquillity of the Empire of Delhi, when, under the celebrated Ackbar, it had reached the very zenith of its power.

There was enough of truth in these arguments to awaken the suspicion of the temporal rulers of Persia; and recent events were calculated to render the government active in their efforts to suppress a heresy of so alarming a character. The Seffavean kings had been taught, by a recollection of their own origin, to be jealous of any of their subjects who appeared disposed to have recourse to the same means: but the Soofees were never actively persecuted, until the last monarch of that race, Shah Sultan Hoossein [o], gave himself up to the priests of the orthodox religion, and allowed them to exercise every severity towards all who departed from the established worship.

The attempt of Nâdir Shah [p] to alter the Sheah faith, and to adopt the Soonee as the national religion of Persia, and the discussion of sacred topics which that monarch in the latter years of his reign invited for the purpose, as he professed, of framing a new faith, had no doubt a serious effect in diminishing the influence of the Mahomedan religion on the minds of his subjects. Kerreem Khan, though reputed a true believer and an observer of the forms of

[n] For the history of this sect, see papers of the late Mr. Leyden, Asiatic Researches, Vol. XI.

[o] See Vol. I. page 400.

[p] See Vol. II. page 16.

worship, was neither rigid himself, nor intolerant of others. During his reign a celebrated Soofee teacher named Meer Maassoom Ali Shah [q], came from India to Shiraz, where his followers soon amounted to more than thirty thousand. The orthodox priests took alarm, and prevailed on the mild Kerreem to banish the saint from his capital, but his reputation was increased by the act of power which proclaimed him dangerous. After Kerreem Khan's death, Meer Maassoom, who resided in a small village near Isfahan, deputed his first disciple, Fyâz Ali [r], to teach in that city.

[q] Meer Maassoom is called a disciple of Syud Ali Rezâ, a native of the Deckan.

[r] The author of the life of some among the principal modern Soofee teachers of Persia states, that Fyâz Ali was of the sect of *Noor-Bukshees͡âh*, or "the Enlightened," who trace their origin to Maroof of Kirkee; and that he aspired to be the teacher of his sect, till Meer Maassoom arrived from India, when he instantly bowed to his superior in knowledge, and was content to become his first disciple. This writer has given us a statement of seventeen tenets openly professed by this sect. They were as follows:

1st. To adore *nothing* and *no person* but God.

2d. To attend to the ordinances of the Prophet and the twelve Imâms.

3d. To be always pure by ablution, and to deprecate the wrath of God.

4th. To observe the regular periods of prayer.

5th. To attend to the five lessons decreed to be observed after particular prayers.

6th. To use the *tusbee* or "string of beads," constantly saying, "O God, thou art the true and only God; thou alone art pure; I am an unworthy sinner; but thou art the Forgiver of sinners."

8th. To remember the constant necessity of a moorshed or teacher, to give strength to devotion, and aid in the dark and difficult path.

9th. To welcome every grief and misfortune as a blessing.

10th. To pain neither oneself nor others.

11th. To trace every morning and evening with the forefinger of the right hand on the forehead the name of the true God, of the Prophet and the twelve Imâms; and on the first of every month, on seeing the new moon, to trace the same sacred words on the breast.

12th. To eat what is lawful, and clothe oneself in clean robes; as such outward habits aid inward purity.

13th. To revere parents with a reverence like unto devotion.

14th. To preserve the mysteries of the sect a profound secret.

15th. To let the heart be always with God, wherever the body may be.

16th. To be kind to all men, to pain none, and to desire to pain none.

17th.

That holy person soon died, and was succeeded in his office by his son, Noor Ali Shah; who, though young in years, was, to use the phrase of his historian, "old in piety." The number and rank of Meer Maassoom's followers excited alarm in the priests of Isfahan, who transmitted so exaggerated an account of the vile heresies [s] of the Soofees to Ali Moorâd Khan, and recommended him so strongly to support the faith, by punishing those whose opinions were alike hostile to true religion and good government, that the monarch, the moment he received their representation, sent orders to cut off the noses and ears of some among the most zealous of the obnoxious sect; and, as a further disgrace, to shave the beards of all who had adopted their opinions. The ignorant soldiers intrusted with the execution of this mandate, were not very capable of discriminating between true believers and infidels: and we are assured by a contemporary writer [t], that many orthodox Mahomedans had their noses and ears cut off and their beards shaved on this memorable occasion.

Some of the principal inhabitants of Isfahan [u], shocked at these proceedings, interested themselves in favour of the Soofees; and Ali Moorâd was persuaded to send a second order to stop the persecution he had at first commanded; but Meer Maassoom Ali and Noor Ali Shah were not willing to remain where they had been so publicly proscribed;

17th. To resign oneself to the will of God in all things; never to complain, but to be grateful for every thing.

These, this writer adds, were the seventeen articles of faith to which this sect was required to conform. These were the tenets taught by Fyâz Ali, before the arrival of Meer Maassoom in Persia.

[s] The writer of the MS. here followed informs us, that men notorious for their profligacy and infamy were employed as spies to discover the doctrine of the Soofees. These men reported that Meer Maassoom was considered as a god by his disciples; and that Noor Ali Shah, Moosthtâk Ali Shah, and others of his favorite disciples personated the angels Gabriel, Israel, &c. &c.

[t] Persian MS.

[u] Meerza Anâyet ollâ Mustoffee is said to have first undeceived Ali Moorâd Khan, and caused him to stop the persecution.

and they proceeded, accompanied by a crowd of followers, to Kerman: there however the chief priest, alarmed by the defection of his flock, denounced vengeance against them, and forced Meer Maassoom to fly to Meshed in Khorassan. He was refused admission into that city, and went to Herat, with the desire of proceeding by Cabool to India: but his fame and the number of his followers alarmed the King of the Affghans, who compelled him to return to Persia. At Kerman, which he revisited, Mooshtâk Ali, the most pious of his disciples, was put to death. One of his crimes was his excellence as a musician: he played upon the târ (a species of guitar with three strings) in so harmonious and touching a manner, as to melt into tears all that heard him: among other accusations, it was alleged that he had called his guitar a divine instrument.

Noor Ali Shah and Meer Maassoom had proceeded to Kerbelah, and intended to have remained there as a place of safety: but the solicitations of the inhabitants of Kermanshah, where they had before resided, induced them to revisit it. The numbers that crowded to meet them excited the jealousy and indignation of the chief priest, a man of the highest reputation for his learning and piety. Alarmed at the rapid progress of infidelity, he determined to put a stop to it by the most violent measures. He placed Noor Ali Shah in confinement: during the commotion that followed, care was taken that the swords of the faithful should slay Meer Maassoom, who was murdered when at prayers in the midst of his followers. The king highly approved of this conduct: the chief priest of Kermanshah, in a most able, but violent letter to the prime minister, which was made public, endeavoured, and not without success, to expose the heresies of the Soofees, against whom it was the object of his life to direct the popular indignation. This sect, however, notwithstanding the efforts of their enemies, continued to increase in numbers; and Noor Ali Shah, with all who adhered to him, were banished the

kingdom. He returned some time afterwards, and was urged by his followers to create a tumult, and to murder the tyrannical priest, who appeared determined on his destruction. The mild spirit of Noor Ali Shah revolted from this extreme; and he again fled to Kerbelah, whence he went towards Moossul. His avowed disciples were at this period about sixty thousand; but many more were supposed to be secretly devoted to him; among them a great majority were inhabitants of Persia. The danger to be apprehended from his fame, and the circumstances attending his death [x], which happened at this time, gave reason to suspect that he was poisoned: and they who were supposed to have perpetrated this act, being natives of Kermanshah, his disciples openly ascribed his death to the great opposer of the Soofees, Aga Mahomed Ali, the mooshtahed [y] or high priest of that city.

Two of his devoted adherents were afterwards taken up and sent to the reigning monarch, who commanded them to be delivered to the high priest of Kermanshah, empowering that determined enemy of the Soofees to do what he chose with them: they were put to death [z].

[x] The writer of his history states, that "two inhabitants of Kermanshah, who were distinguished by an extraordinary appearance of zeal, dressed his dinner on the day that he was suddenly attacked by violent spasms, which in a few hours terminated his existence. Their flight led all to suspect them of having poisoned him. Noor Ali died at nine o'clock on the morning of the tenth of Mohurrum, A. H. 1215. He expired close to the grave of the prophet Jonas, within a league of Moossul."

[y] Aga Mahomed Ali used always to treat this accusation as a malignant calumny. He asserted that the story of Noor Ali Shah being poisoned was an invention, and that he had died of the plague.

[z] The letter from Fatteh Ali Shah, the reigning monarch, to Aga Mahomed Ali, is a curious document. The following is its purport, as given in a MS. in my possession:

"Whereas the Soofees have extended their belief to an alarming extent, and obtained many foolish and credulous converts, who adopt their faith and dress in their fashion; whereas all this is contrary to the interests of the true religion, and has occasioned much thought to the wisest of our state; whereas you also have urged us much on this subject; we have

Some who pretend to knowledge on this subject, estimate the Soofees in Persia at between two and three hundred thousand; but they cannot have any means for forming such a calculation; and they probably include, not only those who believe in the visionary doctrines of this sect, but those whose faith in the efficacy of the established religion has been shaken by the Soofee teachers. The latter class are very numerous: they have probably been increased by the violent means taken to defend the established religion. Every Soofee who has suffered death, is deemed a martyr: those who revere their memory, contend, that truth could never require to be supported by persecution. Great part of the Soofees in Persia are not to be distinguished from the other Mahomedan population. They are required, when in the first ranks of this mystic faith, to conform to the established religion: and the gradual and unobserved manner in which men are led into infidelity, is justly stated by Mahomedan divines to be one of the greatest dangers that attend this delusive doctrine.

In the above account of the Soofees I have limited my observations to the most remarkable facts and events connected with their doctrines and history. To have minutely detailed the opinions of every sect would have been endless: a long catalogue might be given of Soofee saints: but the story of these ephemeral objects of veneration, and a detail of the different tenets, would prove nothing but that they

taken the ill into consideration, and have written to all our governors and officers to punish these offenders if they do not recant; to take from them all they have plundered from weak men; and, if the proprietors cannot be found, to distribute it among the poor. We have in short ordered, that the sect be extirpated and put an end to, in order that the true faith may flourish. Aga Mehdee and Meerza Mehdee have been deceiving the people about Hamadan, who consider them as holy teachers: they were sent prisoners to our presence: we send them by Ashrâff Khan Yessâwul to be delivered over to you, whom we regard as the wisest, the most learned, and most virtuous oulâmâh of our kingdom. Put them to death, confine them, or punish them in the way you deem most proper and consonant to the decrees of the holy religion. May your health and prosperity continue."

are all equally ignorant of that great and inscrutable subject, on which they profess a superior knowledge. I have abstained from any description of the various extraordinary shapes which this mystical faith has taken in India, where it has always flourished, and where it has at times been beneficial in uniting the opposite elements[a] of the Hindu and Mahomedan faith: nor have I ventured to offer any remarks on the similarity between many usages and opinions of the Soofees and those of the Gnostics and other Christian sects, as well as of some of the ancient Greek philosophers. The principal Soofee writers are familiar with the wisdom of Aristotle and Plato: their most celebrated works abound in quotations from the latter. It has been often assumed, that the knowledge and philosophy of Greece were borrowed from the east: if so, the debt has been repaid. An account of Pythagoras, if translated into Persian, would be read as that of a Soofee saint. His initiation into the mysteries of the Divine nature, his deep contemplation and abstraction, his miracles, his passionate love of music, his mode of teaching his disciples, the persecution he suffered, and the manner of his death, present us with a close parallel to what is related of many eminent Soofee teachers, and may lead to a supposition that there must be something similar in the state of knowledge and of society, where the same causes produce the same effects.

The Christian religion has never made any progress in Persia, though that kingdom has been visited by many missionaries. Amid the mountains of Kurdistan there is a small colony of Nestorians[b], supposed to have resided there

[a] This is particularly shewn in the life of Nanuc Shah, the founder of the Sikhs; a nation inhabiting between the Indus and Delhi.

[b] At Sennah in A. D. 1810, I found a colony of forty Nestorian families, who had a pastor and a small church. They appeared to live in great comfort, having uniformly, according to their own account, enjoyed the favour and protection of the Walys or Princes of Ardelan. This is chiefly to be ascribed to their peaceable and industrious habits. They were mostly artificers and manufacturers.

more than thirteen centuries. A Roman Catholic mission has been long established at Isfahan: and the Armenian colony in one of the suburbs of that capital, though they no longer enjoy the privileges bestowed on them by Shah Abbas the Great, are still protected in the free exercise of their religion.

The Jews in Persia, who are not numerous, cannot appear in public, much less perform their religious ceremonies, without being treated with scorn and contempt by the Mahomedans[c]. The Guebres[d]; or "worshippers of fire," do not experience more toleration, except at Yezd, where they obtain respect on account of their numbers. They have in that city a civil magistrate of their own tribe, who presides over their ward; and they observe in their places of worship the forms which were established in the reign of Ardisheer Babigan, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty.

[c] There are numbers of Jewish families at Shiraz, and at Hamadan. This race, who in Persia live despised and in poverty, are not only efficiently protected, but respected in Turkey, where they enjoy both wealth and consideration.

[d] For a description of their religion, see APPENDIX.

Chapter XXI.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PERSIA; WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE JUDICIAL, REVENUE, AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS.

It would be a waste of time to discuss the principles on which orthodox Mahomedans believe the right of governing others to be founded. Since the death of Mahomed, the right of every race of potentates that professed his religion, has rested chiefly on the sword; but through policy the sacred name of Imâm, or "vicar of the prophet," has often been bestowed on those who exercised sovereignty; and we may perhaps refer the comparative permanence of some of the greatest Mahomedan dynasties[e] to the increase of respect derived from the union of the spiritual and temporal powers. No race of kings that has reigned in Persia since the subversion of the Arabian caliphs, has ever been esteemed the head of the Persian religion. The Seffavean monarchs were revered and deemed holy[f], on account of their descent from a saint; but they never assumed the chief ecclesiastical power. That power, which, according to the belief of the Sheahs, was only legitimately exercised by the prophet and the twelve Imâms or descendants of Ali, is considered to belong to Mehdee, the last Imâm, who has disappeared, but is believed still to exist[g]. It is exercised, during his

[e] Particularly the Caliphs of Arabia, and the present royal family of Constantinople.

[f] Kempfer, who visited Persia in A. D. 1712, has given a very curious account of the opinion which the Persians entertained of their sanctity. The water in which the Seffavean monarch washed was deemed a cure for all complaints.

[g] This belief of the Sheahs is in direct opposition to that of the Soonees, who maintain that the Imâm should be always visible. They say he should neither conceal himself, nor be a common object.—D'Ohsson, page 181.

concealment, or rather his invisibility[h], by those holy men who are raised by popular suffrage to the dignity of Mooshtâhed[i], or "high priest:" and who may be deemed at the head of the hierarchy of Persia.

The Monarch of Persia has been pronounced to be one of the most absolute in the world; and it has been shewn that there is reason to believe his condition has been the same from the earliest ages. His word has ever been deemed a law; and he has probably never had any further restraint upon the free exercise of his vast authority, than has arisen from his regard for religion, his respect for established usages, his desire of reputation, and his fear of exciting an opposition that might be dangerous to his power or to his life. There is no assembly[k] of nobles, no popular representation, no ecclesiastical council of Oulamâh[l], in Persia. It is a maxim that the king can do what he chooses, and is completely exempt from responsibility. He can appoint and dismiss ministers, judges, and officers of all ranks. He can also take away the property or the life of any of his subjects; and it would be con-

[h] The Persian word is *Ghaib*; which means, "latent, concealed, invisible."

[i] I write from several Persian manuscripts of authority, and from the information of able natives, with whom I conversed on the subject. Chardin states, (Vol. V. page 223,) that the Seffavean kings were deemed the vicars, or "the successors of the Imâms."

[k] The usages of the Monarchs of Tartary required that they should call a Corooltai, or "assembly of chiefs," on all great occasions; and when their immediate descendants governed Persia, they probably complied with this custom: but the Corooltai appears to have been assembled less as a deliberative body, than to give force and effect to a measure upon which the prince had previously resolved. Nâdir Shah went through the mockery of consulting an assembly of this sort, before he usurped the crown. See Vol. II. page 16.

[l] Oulamâh signifies "learned men;" and as the highest kind of *ilm*, or "science," among the Mahomedans is a knowledge of the Koran and traditions, those who are skilled in this branch of knowledge are termed Oulamâh: in the Turkish empire they are a body of priests, who, acting under the mufti, or "chief pontiff," both controul and support the power of the grand signior.

sidered as treason to affirm that he is controuled by any checks, except such as may be imposed by his prudence, his wisdom, or his conscience. The exact limitations to which he is liable, cannot easily be defined: for they are equally dependent upon his personal disposition, and upon the character and situation of his subjects; particularly of that part of them who, from their condition, are the most exempt from the effects of arbitrary power.

The ecclesiastical class, including the priests who officiate in the offices of religion, and those who expound the law as laid down in the Koran and the books of traditions, are deemed by the defenceless part of the community the principal shield between them and the absolute authority of their monarch. The superiors of this class are free from those personal apprehensions to which almost all others are subject. The people have a right to appeal to them in all ordinary cases, where there appears an outrage against law and justice, unless when the disturbed state of the country calls for the exercise of military power.

The merchants are a numerous and wealthy class; and no part of the community has enjoyed, through all the distractions that kingdom has been afflicted with, and under the worst princes, more security, both in their persons and property. The reason is obvious: their traffic is essential to the revenue; oppression cannot be partially exercised upon them, for the plunder of one would alarm all; confidence would be banished, and trade cease: besides, the merchants of Persia correspond with those of the adjacent countries; and the king that ventured to attack them, must consent to have his name consigned to disgrace and obloquy in every quarter [m].

[m] Notwithstanding these claims to favour and protection, contributions in the shape of loans have often been raised; and fines are occasionally levied, on granting or securing commercial privileges. When a case occurred recently in India, the decision of which materially affected the interests of the Persian merchants, the interference of the court was refused, until a sum should be collected to buy it.

The citizens of great towns have no further protection than what they find in the respect the absolute monarch is disposed to pay to law and usage, and to the character of their priests and magistrates: hence they are much more exposed to the effects of a tyrannical government than the wandering tribes who constitute the military part of the community, and whose condition in a great degree protects them from oppression. These tribes may in fact be considered as a camp of soldiers, only exposed to the common vicissitudes of the military life, and formidable from that social union which produces common feelings of attachment and of resentment. The power of the monarch over this class is liable to the same fluctuations as that which he exercises over the principal tributaries of the kingdom, whose submission or disobedience is always determined by the strength or weakness of his authority.

The Kings of Persia are completely absolute in all that relates to their own family. They may employ their sons in the public service, or immure them in a haram; deprive them of sight, or of life, as their inclination or policy may dictate. The Seffavean kings, after the time of Shah Abbas the Great, confined the princes of the blood; and those not intended for the succession were usually deprived of sight [u], that they might not have it in their power to disturb the peace of the country. The successor to the throne, though fixed upon by the king, was seldom declared until the moment of his elevation: but the rank of the mother was of no consequence: and the son of a slave (if it suited the pleasure of his royal father) had as good pretensions to the crown, as the descendant of the most illustrious prin-

[u] Chardin, vol. v., page 242, states, that "these princes were deprived of sight at all ages." He gives a shocking description of the operation of taking out the eyes, which appears to be the same that is now practised. It had been the custom to sear the eyes with a hot iron; but the discovery that this was not effectual, led to taking them out altogether with a sharp pointed instrument.

cess [o]. The reigning family have adopted usages more congenial to the feelings of the military tribe to which they belong. Several sons of the present monarch are employed in the chief governments of the kingdom: and a prince, not the eldest of the king's sons, but he whose mother is of a high family in the Kajir tribe, has been declared the heir to the crown, and has for many years enjoyed a consideration and exercised a charge suited to his high destination. So that there is no fixed rule for the treating the princes of the blood royal; but in all periods the members of his family have been entirely dependent upon the monarch. Their condition is regulated by his feelings or his policy; and he is considered to have even a more absolute authority over them, than over his domestics, courtiers, and ministers. In fact they have no rights recognised by law or by custom. No mediating power can interpose between them and their parent. Born on a precipice, they are every moment in danger of destruction, and are alike subject to fall by their virtues and their crimes: for the jealousy of a despot is excessive; and he usually views with increased suspicion and alarm every action of those who are placed nearest to his throne.

From what has been stated, we may assume that the power of the King of Persia is by usage absolute over the property and lives of his conquered enemies, his rebellious subjects [p], his own family, his ministers, over public officers, civil and military, and all the numerous train of his domestics; and that he may punish any person of these classes without examination or formal procedure of any kind: in all other cases that are capital, the forms prescribed by law and custom are observed; the monarch only commands, when the evidence has been examined and the law declared, that the sentence shall be put in execution, or that the con-

[o] Chardin, vol. v., page 240.

[p] Bands of public robbers are considered in the same light as rebels, and put to death, when seized, without trial.

demned culprit shall be pardoned. There are no doubt instances in which the king exceeds that prerogative which usage gives him: but these are rare; and when they occur, it is generally under a pretext that the offence is dangerous to the person or to the power of the King. It is obvious, indeed, that the hierarchy could not maintain its respect or popularity, if the law, of which it is the organ, was openly contemned and set aside. But we cannot understand the character of the power possessed by the monarch without constant reference to the condition of the empire he governs. Persia, in its most tranquil state, contains tributaries, who reluctantly acknowledge his authority, and against whom he is annually compelled to employ his troops; mountain tribes, who subsist by plundering their less warlike neighbours; ambitious nobles, who are eager to establish their independence; even the more peaceable part of the population have been of late so habituated to change, that they are prompt to obey any new master whom the fortune of the hour places over them. The sovereign of such a country must be dreaded, or his power could not be effective; and we consequently find, that some of the monarchs who have been stigmatized by travellers for their cruelty, are those under whom Persia has been most prosperous. The exaggerated accounts of their barbarity has arisen in a great degree from the king himself ordering all executions, and from the court of his palace being often the scene of bloodshed. But a practice at which we shudder, is deemed by the Persians essential to the royal power. It adds, they believe, in a very great degree to that impression of terror, which it is necessary to make upon the turbulent and the refractory.

In no country has the monarch more personal duties [q]

[q] A few among the weakest and most depraved of the Seffavean family confined themselves entirely to the palace, and communicated with none except favorite eunuchs: but these remarkable exceptions only prove the general rule.

than in Persia: the mode of performing them appears to have differed very little from the most ancient times to the present day. At an early hour in the morning the principal ministers and secretaries attend the king, make reports on what has occurred, and receive his commands. After this audience, he proceeds to his public levee, which takes place almost every day, and continues about an hour and a half. At this levee, which is attended by the princes, the ministers, and the officers of the court, all affairs which are wished to be made public, are transacted; rewards are given, punishments commanded; and the king expresses those sentiments of displeasure or approbation which he wishes to be promulgated. When this levee is over, he adjourns to a council chamber, where one or two hours are given to his personal favorites, and to his ministers. After the morning has passed in this manner he retires to his inner apartments; in the evening he again holds a levee, less public than that of the morning, and transacts business with his ministers and principal officers of state.

These usual employments are liable to no interruption, but from illness, the pursuit of field sports or occasional exercise on horseback. When in camp, his habits are the same as in the capital: he is from six to seven hours every day in public; during which he is not only seen by, but accessible to, a great number of persons of all ranks. A monarch, whom custom requires to mix so much with his subjects, cannot be ignorant of their condition; and this knowledge, unless his character be very perverse, must tend to promote their happiness.

It is impossible to give an exact description of the duties which the prime minister[r] has to perform: they depend upon the favour and confidence he enjoys, and upon the activity and energy, or indolence and incompetency, of

[r] His Persian title is Hamâd-ood-douleh, "the trusted of the state." He is at present more commonly called Sudder-e-Azim, "first in precedence, or prime minister."

his sovereign. He is usually the medium through which political negotiations and all affairs relating to the general welfare of the state, should be transacted. He receives and introduces foreign ambassadors, corresponds with the principal governors of provinces; and when a decided favorite, he exercises a great influence over all branches of the government. The prime minister is sometimes placed at the head of every department[s]; at other times this great power is divided, and a separate minister has charge of the public revenue[t]. These arrangements rest solely with the king, upon whose favour the ministers are dependent from hour to hour, not only for their authority, but for their property and their lives, which may be said to be always in peril. Their danger increases with their charge; and their time is incessantly occupied in personal attendance upon their sovereign, in the intricacies of private intrigues, or the toils of public business. Men must be very efficient before they are competent to fill such stations; and they are generally selected on account of the reputation they have attained in inferior offices. It is a maxim of policy, not to raise a nobleman of high birth and rank to the station of prime minister. Perhaps few of that class in Persia are equal to the duties: but if they were, it would not be deemed wise to trust men with the use of the king's name and of the royal seal, who might employ them to further their own plans of ambition, and who could not be cast down without exciting a murmur of discontent, if not a spirit of turbulence, among their vassals and adherents. As the administration is in general constituted, the

[s] The late Hajee Ibrahim, during the whole period that he was prime minister to Aga Mahomed Khan, presided over every department of the state.

[t] This is the case at present: Meerza Shuffee is prime minister; but Hajee Mahomed Hussein Khan presides over the financial and revenue departments. The title attached to this office was *Ameen-ood-Douleh*, or "the safety of the state." He is at present called *Nizam-ood-Douleh*, or "the regulator of the state."

disgrace or execution of a minister creates no sensation whatever. There are instances of a departure from this policy; but they are too rare to be considered otherwise than as exceptions.

Besides his chief ministers, the King of Persia is aided by secretaries of state [u] in every department: they preside over different offices or chambers of accounts [x]; and the accounts of the receipts and disbursements throughout the ecclesiastical, civil, revenue, and military branches of the government, are kept with much regularity and precision. It is rarely, however, that any of the officers filling these departments enjoy any extensive influence; although it is from this class that the ministers of the crown are often selected.

A great change has taken place in the whole frame of the Court since the Seffavean kings occupied the throne. Some of these monarchs passed a great part of their time in the haram. The consequence was, that they fell under the dominion of women and eunuchs. The latter were sometimes promoted to the first stations in the kingdom, and always exercised a commanding influence. The chiefs of warlike tribes, who have filled the throne since the downfall of this family, have not yet changed the manly habits of their ancestors for such degenerate usages; and eunuchs are very seldom employed beyond the walls of the haram [y]. The chief officers of the household, those who preside over the ceremonies of the court, and the domestics, have not necessarily any official concern with the affairs of government: but as they often, particularly the latter, become great favorites, and enjoy the personal confidence of their

[u] The Moonshee-ool-Moomâlik, or secretary of state; and the Mustoffees, or counsellors, are among the first in rank: their seal is necessary to every royal mandate.

[x] These offices are termed Dufter Khânâh, or chambers of records.

[y] I have known only two or three instances of eunuchs employed in situations of trust during the present reign: they were treated with uncommon attention and deference,

master more than his ministers, they attain in an indirect manner to a considerable influence, if not authority.

The law of Persia, as of all Mahomedan nations, is founded upon the Koran and the traditions. Hence the duties of priest and judge are combined; and the hierarchy has attained great power, from the priests being the administrators of the sacred law, and thus having the ability to shield the people in some degree from the incessant attacks they are exposed to, from the violence and rapacity of their sovereigns and rulers.

Justice is administered in Persia in two distinct modes; as to which a few observations will be useful, not merely to explain their origin, but to elucidate the causes that lead to their frequent collision. The written law, which Persia has in common with every Mahomedan country, is termed Sherrâh. It is founded on the Koran, and the Soona, or oral traditions: but, since the establishment of the Sheah faith, the learned ecclesiastics who administer this law, have rejected all traditions that come from the three first caliphs, or from others deemed the personal enemies of Ali, and the family of the Prophet.

By the theory of a Mahomedan government there should be no other courts of justice except those established for the admininistration of the Sherrâh, or written law: but in Persia there is another branch of judicature, termed Urf, that is, known or customary: the secular magistrates who administer it, are to decide all cases brought before them according to precedent, or custom. This law, if it can be termed such, is never written; for Mahomedans can have no written laws but the Koran and traditions. It varies in different parts of the empire, having reference to local as well as common usages. The king, as temporal monarch, is at the head of the Urf, which may be considered as an emanation from the royal authority, although it is administered upon a professed regard for the habits and prejudices of the people.

There can be no doubt as to its origin. The rulers and chiefs of Persia, though converts to the Mahomedan faith, have never been disposed to sacrifice their temporal power, nor the laws and usages they had inherited from their forefathers; and while they submitted to such ordinances as were deemed sacred and indispensable, they have preserved, as more conformable to their prejudices and to their system of government, the Urf, or customary law; but the administration of it has always varied with the power and disposition of the monarch. There have been periods[a] when the religious zeal of the sovereign has caused almost every case to be referred to the ecclesiastical judges; at others the whole authority has been vested in the secular magistrates[a]. The latter are naturally prone to encroach upon the privileges of the former; and as they possess power, they can seldom be at a loss for pretexts.

The ecclesiastical order pretend that the Sherrâh, or divine law, should take cognizance of all cases whatever; while the courts of Urf, supported by the temporal power, have limited their functions to disputes about religious ceremonies, inheritance, marriage, divorce, contracts, sales, and all civil cases; while it reserves to itself the decision on all proceedings about murder, theft, fraud, and every crime that is capital, or that can be called a breach of the public peace[b].

Before the reign of Nâdir Shah, the hierarchy enjoyed power and wealth. The chief pontiff, or Sudder-ool-Suddoor, was deemed the vicar of the Imâm, and exercised a very extensive authority. The priesthood were all subordi-

[a] In the reign of Sultan Hoossein all cases are said to have been decided according to the Sherrâh.

[a] This was the case under Nâdir Shah.

[b] Though the lay magistrates reserve to themselves the decision on the procedure in cases of murder, they call upon the aid of the court of Sherrâh whenever they desire to act according to the law: in all such cases evidence is taken, and the law declared by the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, or presiding judge of the court of Sherrâh.

nate to this spiritual ruler, who resided at court, and with the approbation of the sovereign nominated the principal judges. The lands with which the different mosques and charitable buildings were endowed, produced a very great revenue; and the office instituted for managing these funds acted entirely under the direction of the Sudder-ool-Suddoor, or Nawab, as he was sometimes called, in allusion to his office as lieutenant of the holy Imâm. Abbas the Great desired to abolish an office which vested so great a power in the individual who filled it; and on the death of the chief pontiff no successor was nominated. But his grandson and successor, Shah Soofee, who feared to persevere in this measure, adopted the expedient of appointing two persons to this high dignity. He thought by dividing the power to diminish the influence of the possessors. One of them was called the Sudder-ool-Suddoor-e-Khas, "the personal, or King's Chief Pontiff;" the other, the Sudder-ool-Suddoor-e-Aum, or "the Chief Pontiff of the People."

The former took rank of the latter, though their duties were nearly the same. Nâdir Shah not only abolished this office [c] altogether, but, as has been related, seized the lands appropriated to the ecclesiastical establishments, in order to pay his troops. These lands have never been fully restored; and the hierarchy is not likely to regain its former wealth and power.

The order of chief priests, who are named Mooshtâhed [d],

[c] Nâdir Shah, when he abolished the office, granted a small pension to the person who held it. His descendants retain this provision and the title of Nawab. In 1800 I dined in company with the present representative of the family. He had come from Yezd to Teheran. Though he had no station, and no duties to perform, he was treated with great respect. All the first nobles and ministers were of the party, and all concurred in giving the seat of honour to the nominal high priest.

[d] The word Mooshtâhed, which is the active participle of an Arabic verb, may be translated "the giver of evidence." This order of high priests existed, though with less authority than they now enjoy, during the reign of the Seffavean monarchs. Kæmpfer has given a very good description of them. He observes, that "in order to captivate the affections, and

has always existed in Persia; but since the station of Sudder-ool-Suddoor was abolished they have attained a greater degree of power than they before possessed. They fill no office, receive no appointment, have no specific duties, but are called, from their superior learning, piety, and virtue, by the silent but unanimous suffrage of their countrymen, to be their guides in religion, and their protectors against their rulers; and they receive a respect and duty which lead the proudest kings to join the popular voice, and to pretend, if they do not feel, a veneration for them.

attract the veneration of the people, *who alone have the right of conferring this title*, they (the mooshtâheds) affect exterior sanctity, and the most rigid frugality; they shun honours and amusements, and all species of frivolities; their only discourse is on holy and edifying subjects, and all their thoughts appear directed to heaven; they preach the most mild doctrines; they show the greatest patience with their disciples, whom they correct, not only without harshness, but with exemplary moderation; they speak little, and are very sententious; their answers are full of unction, and the odour of the saint seems spread around them; they wear a white cloak, woven of camels' or goats' hair; their head is covered with a high white cap, which gives to their countenance a pallid and thin appearance. When a mooshtâhed is mounted on his mule, his eyes are always cast down; two servants are his only attendants, both of whom walk; the one guides the animal on which the holy man rides, the other carries his book. These high priests often recite in the mosques much longer prayers than those usually said by the faithful, and afterwards retiring into a corner, they preach and give pious instructions to the multitude, who are in ecstasy with their sublime devotion. It is with these holy tricks, that they captivate men's affections, establish a reputation for sanctity, and obtain from the silent suffrages of the people a species of supreme pontificate. But it must be acknowledged, they do not easily attain success in this career of hypocrisy. The title of mooshtâhed is only granted to him who is master of seventy sciences, and even then he must be held in the highest consideration both by the king and the people."—*Amœnitates Exoticæ*, p. 103, 104.

This learned and observing author is rather uncharitable in deeming the whole life of the mooshtâhed to be a course of hypocrisy. Mahomedans are often bigots, but seldom hppocrites; and an attentive observation of the character and conduct of the principal mooshtâheds in Persia has led me to a very different conclusion. Several of them have appeared to me men of sincere piety and goodness; and their chief duty, which is to defend the weak against the strong, appears singularly calculated to inspire and preserve noble sentiments and habits.

There are seldom more than three or four mooshtâheds*. Their conduct is expected to be exemplary, and to show no worldly bias; neither must they connect themselves with the king or the officers of government. They seldom depart from that character to which they owe their rank. The reason is obvious; the moment they deviate, the charm is broken; men no longer solicit their advice or implore their protection; nor can they hope to see the monarch courting popularity by walking to their humble dwellings, and placing them on the seat of honour when they condescend to visit his court. When a mooshtâhed dies, his successor is always a person of the most eminent rank in the ecclesiastical order; and, though he may be pointed out to the populace by others of the same class seeking him as an associate, it is rare to hear of any intrigues to obtain this enviable dignity.

The mooshtâheds exercise a great, though undefined, power over the courts of Sherrâh, or written law; the judges constantly submit cases to their superior knowledge; and their sentence is irrevocable, unless by a mooshtâhed still more distinguished for learning and sanctity. But the benefits derived from the influence of these high priests are not limited to their occasional aid in the courts of justice; the law is respected from the character of its ministers; kings fear to attack the decrees of tribunals over which they may be said to preside, and frequently endeavour to obtain popularity by referring cases to their decision. The sovereign, when no others dare approach him, cannot refuse to listen to a revered mooshtâhed when he becomes an intercessor for the guilty. Their habitations are deemed sanctuaries for the oppressed; and the hand of despotic power

* When I was in Persia, there were, I think, five: Aga Mahomed Ali of Kermanshah, (who has been before mentioned,) Meerza Abool Hoossein of Koom, and Hajee Meer Mahomed Hoossein of Isfahan, were the most celebrated. Hajee Syud Hoossein, of Cazveen, had died five years before I first visited Persia: but his memory was so highly venerated, that his house continued to be considered a sanctuary.

is sometimes taken off from a city, because the monarch will not offend a mooshtâhed, who has chosen it for his residence, but who refuses to dwell amid violence and injustice.

The next in rank to the mooshtâhed is the Shaikh-ool-Islâm; a term which literally means, "the elder or chief of the faith;" but which in its common sense signifies the supreme judge of the court of Sherrâh, or written law. There is a shaikh-ool-islâm in every principal city: he is nominated by the king, from whom he receives a liberal salary; but the desire and wishes of the inhabitants are almost invariably consulted, and the individual is usually promoted from a belief of his superior sanctity and knowledge. These officers often attain a respect hardly inferior to that enjoyed by the mooshtâhed. They studiously avoid any open connexion with men in power: even the appearance of such an intercourse would lose them the respect and confidence of the people, who are naturally very jealous of their independence and integrity. In large cities there is a Cauzee[f], or judge under the shaikh-ool-islâm; and the latter has in general the further aid of a council of moollahs, or learned men, many of whom give their services gratuitously, in the hope of increasing their reputation, or of recommending themselves to notice and employment. In the lesser towns there is only a cauzee: in villages they have seldom more than an inferior moollah, capable of reading a few sentences of Arabic, which enables him to perform the ceremonies at a marriage or funeral, to make out common deeds, and to decide on plain and obvious cases. When subjects of intricacy occur, he refers to the cauzee of the neighbouring town, by whom the cause is often carried before the shaikh-ool-islâm, or supreme judge of the provincial capital.

[f] This officer was originally the supreme civil judge in all Mahomedan countries: he still retains great powers in Turkey, though under the mufti; and in the Mahomedan states in India he is the chief judge: but in Persia the cauzee is considered under the shaikh-ool-islám, in all cities where that high office exists.

There is also in Persian courts an officer who bears the name of Mufti, but who has none of the great powers associated with that title in Turkey. His duty is more to prepare an exposition of the case before the court, and to aid with his advice, than to decide: but as this office requires a man of learning, his opinion often influences the judgement of his superiors.

The lower ranks of the priesthood are seldom entitled to that praise which has been bestowed on some of the superior branches. They neither enjoy, nor can expect, popular fame, as their situations are not permanent; and they seldom rise to the higher ranks of their profession. They are exposed to great temptation; and receive but a very limited income. So we can believe that there is truth in those accusations which represent them as being in general equally ignorant, corrupt, and bigoted.

The art and venality of the cauzees and moollahs are often noticed by Persian writers; and the character of this class has almost always been drawn in the harshest colours by European travellers. Chardin states that "nothing but the establishment of the Urf, or customary law, which is administered by the secular magistrates, could enable a person, not of the Mahomedan faith, to carry on any commercial transactions in Persia; as the bigotry of the priests, and the strict letter of the only law which they administer, that of the Koran and the traditions, would operate to deprive him of every hope of justice: that, when an application was made to the courts of Sherrâh against a bankrupt, he was so sheltered[g] under its forms and prescriptive laws, that even his goods could not be seized for the payment of his debts: but if the suit was transferred before the lay

[g] The Mahomedan law against debtors is sufficiently severe: and the creditor (if a Mahomedan) has every means he could desire of recovering his property; but the letter of the Sherrâh, or written law, is in no point favorable to unbelievers; and the bigoted ecclesiastics, by whom it was administered, were not even disposed to grant them the benefit of the law.

magistrate who decided by the customary law, it was only necessary to authenticate the demands against him to obtain an order for the seizure and sale of his property to satisfy them."

The Urf, or customary law, which is administered by the king[h], his lieutenants, the rulers of provinces, governors of cities, lay magistrates of towns, managers and collectors of districts, and heads of villages, aided by all the different subordinate officers under them, bears some resemblance, in its cognizance of petty offences, to that authority which, in better ordered communities, is vested in magistrates of police: but the magistrates in Persia always exercise the chief local authority, and consequently are above the law instead of being checked by it. Their decrees are instantly enforced by the strong hand of power. They are prompt and arbitrary in their decisions: and as they seldom bestow much time on the consideration of evidence, they are continually liable to commit injustice, even if their intentions are pure. The principal check upon them is the dread of superiors, to whom the injured may always appeal: but it is easier to explain the duties, than to describe the conduct, of men, who regulate their actions by the varying disposition of the despot of the day, and are active and just, or corrupt and cruel, as he happens to be vigilant and virtuous, or avaricious and tyrannical.

The lowest officers intrusted with the administration of the Urf, or customary law, hear complaints of all kinds, and summon evidence: even the heads of villages are

[h] During the Seffavean dynasty, we learn from Kæmpfer, Chardin, and others, there was always a Dewan Beggee, or chief of the council, who superintended this department. That department does not now exist. It was one of great power and influence; and the late Monarchs of Persia have probably been jealous of giving it to one of their principal nobles. The late Sulimân Khan Kajir was for a day styled Dewan Beggee, in order to adjust a ceremony when I first went to the court of Persia; and it was alleged, that the person holding that high office represented the person of the king.

allowed to inflict slight punishments, or impose small fines; but if the crime be serious, the delinquent is sent to the collector and magistrate of the district[1], whose power is more extensive: and when the case, from the magnitude of the property concerned, the rank of the parties, or the heinousness of the crime, appears above the collector's cognisance, he refers it to the governor of the province, who is generally competent to decide on all such cases as do not affect life. But the power of putting to death is seldom delegated by the king, unless when a country is in rebellion, or when the government is committed to one of the blood royal. In all other circumstances, when an example is necessary, the proof of guilt, taken according to legal forms before the court of Sherrâh, is sent to the king, and a royal mandate is transmitted for the execution of the criminal.

The lay magistrates always hold their courts of justice publicly, which undoubtedly operates as a salutary check upon their proceedings. These courts are sometimes very tumultuous, though the judge is aided by a crowd of inferior officers, whose duty is to preserve order. The women who attend these courts, are often the most vociferous: the servants of the magistrates are not permitted to silence them with those blows, which in case of disturbance they liberally inflict upon the men.

The jurisdiction of the courts of written and customary law neither is, nor, from the constitution of the latter, can be, clearly defined. The sovereign and his ministers promote this confusion of authority, which adds to their power and emolument. But though in civil and criminal cases appeals, or rather complaints, are carried from one of these courts to the other, all deeds, contracts, marriages, and divorces, must be drawn up by the officers of the Sherrâh;

[1] This person is called Zaubit. He collects the revenues, and exercises a limited judicial authority.

and their decisions are received as evidence by the lay magistrate; who is also in the habit of referring to them all such cases as, either from personal[k] or political reasons, he desires should be decided by their authority: in criminal cases, where a regular procedure is adopted, the chief judge of the court of Sherrâh pronounces sentence according to the decrees of the sacred law.

The decisions of the courts of Persia, whether those of written or customary law, are speedily obtained; and a suit in them is attended with little apparent cost, though considerable sums are often given in bribes. The administration of the customary law, or Urf, is more summary than that of Sherrâh, because it is more arbitrary. All forms and delays of law arise out of a respect for persons and property that is unknown to this branch of the administration of justice in Persia; which always imitates in its decisions, the promptness of that despotic authority from which it proceeds, and by which it is supported.

It has been already stated, that the King of Persia deems himself vested with an authority independent of the law; and considers that, from the prerogative of his high condition he can take away the life or the property of any one of his subjects: but it has been shewn that the exercise of this power is practically limited. In all cases where he does not decide personally, or delegate his arbitrary authority to others, the criminal law is administered in a manner conformable to the Koran. Theft may be forgiven[l], and murder compounded, if the party from whom the property

[k] Where a lay magistrate conceived his decision might involve him in dispute with any person of rank or influence, or feared that by punishing a man of a tribe he might excite a dangerous spirit of revenge, he would certainly refer the case to the court of Sherrâh.

[l] The Koran states, "If a man or woman steal, cut off their hands in retribution for that which they have committed;" but adds, in a subsequent sentence, "Whoever shall repent, after his iniquity, and amend, verily God will be turned unto him; for God is inclined to forgive and to be merciful." It is from the latter passage that commentators have inferred the right of forgiveness in the injured.

is stolen, or the legal heir of the person slain are disposed to mercy. Mutilation for theft, though commanded in the Koran, is rarely practised: but the king often inflicts capital punishment on those who are convicted of having stolen to any large amount. When a man or woman is murdered [m], the moment the perpetrator is discovered, the heir at law to the deceased demands vengeance. Witnesses are examined: if the guilt be established, the criminal is delivered into his hands, to deal with him as he chooses. It is alike lawful to forgive him, to accept a sum of money as the price of blood, or to put him to death. Only a few years ago [n] the English resident at Abusheher saw three persons delivered up to the relations of those whom they had murdered. They were led bound to the burial ground, and put to death: but the part of the execution which appeared of most importance, was to make the children of the deceased stab the murderers with knives, and imbrue their little hands in the blood of those who had slain their father. The youngest princes of the blood that could hold a dagger, were made to stab the assassins of the late Aga Mahomed Khan at their execution; and the successor of Nâdir Shah sent one of his murderers to the females of his haram, who, we are told, were delighted to put him to death [o].

In the time of the Seffavean kings, the court of the Dewan Beggee, or "supreme criminal judge," decided upon

[m] In all cases of murder Mahomed has expressly commanded the law of retaliation. "The free shall die for the free, the servant for the servant, and a woman for a woman:" but he adds, "He whom his brother shall forgive, may be prosecuted, and obliged to make satisfaction, according to what is just; and a fine shall be set upon him with humanity. This is indulgence from your Lord, and mercy: and he who shall transgress after this by killing the murtherer, shall be grievously punished."—SALE's *Koran*, Vol. I. page 30.

Manslaughter, according to the Koran, is to be expiated by releasing a believer from slavery, by paying a fine to the relations of the deceased, or by giving alms.

[n] I received the account of this transaction from Mr. Hankey Smith, late British resident at Abusheher.

[o] Vol. II. page 54, note.

the cases of murder and robbery which occurred not only in the metropolis, but over the whole kingdom [p]. This court took particular cognisance of four crimes; the knocking out of a tooth, or of an eye, rape, and murder. Other crimes were judged on the spot where they were committed, by the Haukim, or "chief magistrate," who referred all civil suits to the Sherrâh or "court of written law;" but it was the peculiar privilege of nobles, public ministers, and all the king's guests, including ambassadors and envoys from foreign states, to have every suit instituted by them or brought against them, tried only in the court of the Dewan Beggee, or "supreme judge." Kæmpfér states that the Urf, or "customary law," accommodated itself to the usages of the place where it was administered. This is still the practice; but the high office of Dewan Beggee no longer exists. Its powers are exercised by the monarch: however in most instances where he has appointed one of his sons to govern a province, he has vested him with the power of pronouncing and executing the sentence of death upon convicted criminals, as well as of taking cognisance of and punishing all other crimes, which were formerly noticed by the court of the Dewan Beggee [q].

The mode and degree of punishment in cases decided by the Sherrâh is the same in Persia as in all other Mahomedan countries: but when the sentence is pronounced by the king, or by the governors or military commanders to whom he has delegated his authority, the punishment varies according to the disposition of the inflicter. For lesser offences, fines, flogging, and the bastinado, are the commonest punishments. Torture is seldom used, except to make men reveal hidden treasures. The inhuman practice

[p] Kæmpfer.

[q] There was formerly, and is still, an officer in the courts of justice, called Vakeel-ool-Raya, or "the advocate of the people." The continuance of his name, even though his duties may be dormant, proves that there is a desire to have the reputation of attending to justice.

of taking out the eyes has long disgraced Persia. The objects are usually persons who have aspired to, or are supposed likely to aspire to, the throne; or chiefs of tribes, whom it is desirable to deprive of power, without putting them to death: and this punishment has been inflicted on the male inhabitants of a rebellious city, in order to intimidate by a dreadful example. The common mode of putting criminals to death is by strangling, by decapitation, or by stabbing: in cases of enormity, or where there is a desire to strike terror [r] or to gratify revenge, inventive cruelty endeavours to discover new ways of adding to the sufferings of its victims. They are sometimes doomed to protracted tortures; at others are empaled, or have their limbs torn asunder by the rebounding branches of trees that have been bent for the purpose [s]. An instance has been given of a barbarous chief associating the idea of luxurious enjoyment with the horrors of the most cruel death, by making a garden of his enemies [t]: and the history of Persia abounds with examples too shocking to be related, of tyrants glutting their vengeance, by subjecting their enemies, before they granted them the mercy of death, to the most shameless insults and horrid injuries.

In Persia women are seldom publicly executed [u]; nor can their crimes, from their condition in society, be often of a nature to demand such examples: but they are exposed

[r] I find in Mr. Jukes's Journal an account of a dreadful punishment at Teheran, when he was there in 1810. A slave had poisoned the family he served. Though they all recovered, by the instant application of remedies, the man was fully convicted, and sentenced by the king to be hung by the heels in the common market-place, and cut up as a butcher does the carcase of a sheep: but he was denied the mercy shewn to that animal of having his throat cut before he was quartered.

[s] Vol. I. page 57, note.

[t] Vol. II. page 77.

[u] When the case is very aggravated, an example is made. Some time ago at Tebreez a woman who had poisoned her husband, was cast headlong from a high tower by the common executioner.

to all the violence and injustice of domestic tyranny; and innocent females are too often included in the punishment of their husbands and fathers; particularly where they are of high rank. Instances frequently occur where women are tortured to make them reveal the concealed wealth of which they are supposed to have a knowledge; and when a nobleman or minister is put to death, it is not unusual to give away his wives and daughters as slaves; and sometimes, though rarely, they are bestowed on the lowest classes in the community[x]. This usage is defended on the ground of the necessity to make terrible examples of men in high stations: it is argued, that nothing is so likely to deter others from equal guilt, as the dread of having their families exposed to similar dishonour: but no reasoning can reconcile us to a practice, at once infamous, inhuman, and unjust; which marks, perhaps, beyond all others, the wanton atrocity of a despotic and barbarous power[y].

The king nominates the Beglerbegs, or governors of provinces, and the Haukims, or governors of cities, who are not required to be natives of the place of their government; nor is the Darogah, or lieutenant of police, who acts immediately under the Haukim or governor: but the Kalanter, or chief magistrate of the city, and the Kut-khodahs, or magistrates of different wards, though nominated by the king, must be selected from the most respectable inhabitants, just as the members of the corporation are in any English town. Although these officers are not formally elected, the voice of the people always points them out: and if the king should appoint a magistrate disagreeable to the citizens, he could not perform his duties, which require all the weight he derives from personal consideration to aid the authority of office. In small towns or villages the voice of

[x] The wives of men of high rank have been given to mule drivers.

[y] The inhabitants of the Turkish provinces in the vicinity of Persia, who are far from being civilized, have a right, from their opposite usage of the females belonging to criminals of rank, to speak of this practice with horror and indignation.

the inhabitants in nominating their Kut-khodah, or head[1], is still more decided: if one is named of whom they do not approve, their clamour produces either his resignation or removal. These facts are important; for no privilege is more essential to the welfare of a people, than that of choosing or influencing the choice of their magistrates. It is true, these magistrates cannot always screen them from the hand of power, and are often compelled to become the instruments of oppression: still their popularity with their fellow-citizens, which caused their elevation, continues to be their strength; and in the common exercise of their duties they attend to their comfort, happiness and interests. In every city or town of any consequence, the merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, and labourers, have each a head, or rather a representative[2], who is charged with the peculiar interests of his class, and manages all their concerns with the governor of the town. He is chosen by the community he belongs to, and is appointed by the king. He is seldom removed, except on the complaint of those whose representative he is deemed; and even they must bring forward and substantiate charges of neglect or of criminal conduct.

No general description of the administration of justice can comprehend all the various communities in an empire like Persia. It has been before mentioned that the military part of the inhabitants are divided into tribes, who derive their origin from different nations: the Turks from Turkistan, or Tartary; the Arabs from Arabia; and the original Persians, consisting of Kurds, Lacs, Zends, and many others. All these tribes, though speaking different languages, have nearly similar customs. They dwell in

[1] The head of the village is sometimes called Reis, an Arabic term signifying the head person, or chief. The use of it in Persia is, I believe, confined to the districts inhabited by persons descended from the tribes of Arabia.

[2] He is termed Wasta-asanaf, or the mediator or representative of his class.

tents; subsist upon their flocks, or the chase; and change their residence with the season. The system of internal government with this whole race of men is nearly the same. They profess the Mahomedan religion, and acknowledge the authority of the written law laid down in the Koran and the traditions. During the reign of the Seffavean kings, the Sudder-ool-Suddoor, or chief pontiff, appointed a Cauzee, or judge, to every one of the principal tribes, whose power formed a considerable check upon the chief. When Nâdir Shah abolished the office of Sudder-ool-Suddoor, he changed this system; the only persons of a religious character at present among the tribes, are moollahs, who perform marriage ceremonies, give names to children, or repeat the prayers at a funeral. In cases of importance they apply to the cauzee, or the shaikh-ool-islâm, of the nearest town.

The customary law of these tribes differs materially from that of the rest of the population. Besides the chief, there are persons, called elders, at the head of each division, or branch, who, in general, are related to the chief, and form the magistracy of the tribe in peace, its officers in war. Their station, like that of their chieftain, is hereditary. From this body of elders the chief, when he does not reside with the tribe, must select his deputy, who has as much power over the tribe as a governor of a city has over its inhabitants; although his rule, from the habits of the persons under him, is in some instances more lenient and patriarchal, in others it is more absolute, possessing more of a military character; but, generally speaking, both the chiefs and their deputies are careful to preserve the attachment of their followers. However, there are frequent exceptions; and these petty rulers, when powerful, are often cruel and oppressive. Common cases are decided by the chief, or his deputy, as by the lay magistrate of a city. But when a person of any consequence is concerned, the proceeding is less summary; a council or meeting of elders is called, the

question is fully discussed, and is decided by a majority of voices. Any man of family has the privilege of claiming this trial, and it would be oppressive to refuse it. In a dispute between inferior persons it cannot be demanded as a right, but is often resorted to by a chief or his deputy, who is desirous of popularity, as the tribe almost invariably accord in the justice of a sentence passed by this tribunal.

Such a council is not limited to any determinate number. If it be to decide on any dispute about land, it consists of the principal landholders[b]: if on a case of debt, the chief elders, and the friends of the debtor and creditor, meet to adjust it. When a murder is committed, the relations of the deceased and of the murderer are summoned; and if both belong to the tribe, they are admitted to the assembly. The moollah of the tribe usually forms one of the council, and expounds the holy law. This council generally tries to accommodate the dispute, and appears to have been constituted for preserving harmony in the tribe[c]; but when it cannot settle the difference, its authority is given to support the law. Among the wandering tribes, as among citizens, if a debtor refuse payment, after a cauzee has signed a decree that the demands against him are just, he is either allowed a moderate period to make his payments good, or his property is seized, and divided in equal shares among his creditors[d]. A murderer, when the crime is proved, is given up to the heir of the deceased[e], who may forgive him,

[b] Persian MS.

[c] About eight years ago, a high noble of the tribe of Kajir, was suspected of treason. The reigning monarch assembled a jaunkhoo, or council of elders, of the tribe, before whom he laid all the proofs of his guilt. They sentenced him to be severely punished and disgraced. This was a remarkable instance of an absolute sovereign choosing rather to exercise his patriarchal power as chief of a tribe, than his prerogative as king of Persia.

[d] The same law with regard to bankrupts prevails in all Mahomedan countries. In Persia, as has been before stated, the magistrate corrects the defects of the religious code, in cases where Jews, Christians, or Hindoos are creditors.

[e] If the heir be not twelve years of age, the murderer is confined until he

or take the price of blood [f], or put him to death. It is almost always the object of the council of elders to compound for murder, especially when the parties are of different tribes; for if pride or any other motive prevent this, and the offender is screened from justice, the heir and relations of the murdered person feel disgraced till they obtain revenge. In such cases, where the party has not strength to compel justice, assassination is applauded, though it almost always occasions more murders, and interminable blood feuds [g]. The heir of a person who has been murdered

reaches that age. Under the pretext of attending to this law, Abbas the Great evaded punishing the person he had employed to murder his eldest son.—Vide Vol. I. p. 374.

[f] The price of blood, as stated in the Koran, is a hundred camels, and the freeing a Moslem from captivity; but this verse, like every other in that volume, has been variously interpreted. In Persia this fine is not regulated by any precise rules, but depends chiefly on what the one party can pay, and the other exact. It is also affected by the rank of the party: enormous sums have been sometimes given for inducing a tribe to forgive the blood of a chief.

[g] These feuds are most prevalent when the country is most distracted. An ambitious chief employs those who are desirous of revenging personal or family wrongs, to promote his cause. Many instances might be mentioned: I know none more remarkable than the feud between the families of the chief of the tribe of Shuftee and that of the governors of Resht, the capital of Ghilan. A MS. in my possession contains the following statement of this family war. "In the time of Shah Sultan Hoossein, Kasim Khan Shuftee slew Aga Kumâl, governor of Resht; his son, Aga Jumâl, slew Kerreem, the son of Kasim, who had murdered his father. Aga Raffeah, the brother of Kasim, slew Aga Jumâl, and revenged his nephew. Hedâyet Khan, the son of Aga Jumâl, slew Aga Raffeah, and five of his brothers and nephews; a child, called Aga Ali, the son of Kasim, was the only person of the family of Shuftee that was preserved. Hedâyet Khan, desiring to employ the tribe of Shuftee, was compelled to put this child at their head, as they refused to serve except under one of the blood of their chief. Aga Ali made his escape, and when he attained his sixteenth year, was aided by Aga Mahomed Khan in an attempt to revenge his father, uncle, and brother. He succeeded in taking Hedâyet Khan, whom he slew. Two of that chief's sons, Hoossein Ali and Fatteh Ali, were sent to the Persian court, and when the present king obtained the throne, he gave the former a small force to recover Ghilan. This chief ordered two of his men to conceal themselves in a wood, and assassinate Aga Ali; they did so: and the relations of that

frequently demands, not only goods and horses, but one or more of the nearest female relations[h] of the murderer in marriage: this is deemed the best mode of ending the feud, as it binds in ties of kindred those who before were the most inveterate enemies.

The tribes of Persia have very different usages with regard to forgiveness of murder: some have a pride in being considered implacable, and invariably exact life for life; but this is not common. If a person belonging to a tribe desire forgiveness for a murder that he has committed, he hangs a sword round his neck with a black cord, goes in that manner to the heir, and says that he comes to receive his doom. Though the laws of honour almost always restrain his enemy from putting him to death, it is very rarely that even the mandates of his superiors can compel one of these fierce barbarians to save his life by what he deems an unmanly and abject submission. When a man of a wandering tribe, or a poor citizen, who has committed murder, is condemned to pay the price of blood, but cannot raise the amount, he is obliged to wear a large iron collar round his neck, and to beg till he collect enough to discharge the fine. The persons who carry this symbol of

chief, alarmed at his fate, fled to the island of Lankeroon, and claimed the protection of Moostâphâ Khan Talish. The reigning monarch invited them to return to their family possessions of Shuft. On his sending a sealed Koran, as the most sacred of all pledges, they came back; but they thought of nothing but revenge: day and night they watched the movements of Hoossein Ali: at last one of the brothers of Aga Ali succeeded in shooting him, as he was riding along the road. There has yet," the writer who gives this account states, "appeared no man of courage among the descendants of Hedâyet Khan; but the murdered Hoossein Ali has left an infant son, and if this boy prove worthy of his family, he will no doubt revenge the blood of his father."

When this account was written, in 1810, the feud between the families had continued about seventy years.

[h] He who receives a bride in this manner, neither pays the customary sums to his father-in-law, nor settles a dowry on his wife. It is not unusual to demand two or three females from the family of the murderer, for the heir and nearest relations of the deceased.

their guilt and repentance, are the most importunate of mendicants.

The crimes of rape and adultery are very rare among the wandering tribes, and are almost always punished with death, generally inflicted by the nearest relations of the females whose honour has been violated[i]. The promiscuous manner in which these tribes live, admits of no laxity upon this point, as such could not fail of producing general depravity. Hence the chastity of their females is guarded by usages, which are never infringed with impunity: in cases of adultery, both parties often become the victims of jealousy and revenge[k]; and if the fact be proved, the murderer is applauded for having vindicated his honour.

When the chief of a tribe commits any open act of treason or of hostility against the government, the king, if he can seize him, deprives him of sight, or puts him to death without hesitation: but if he has merited capital punishment for any other crime[l], the case is referred to the Sherrâh, that his blood may not rest upon the monarch. When a man of inferior rank belonging to a tribe, but in the king's immediate employ, deserves death, the king usually makes him over to his chief, who repays this confidence by his immediate execution. All these circumstances shew that the military tribes are governed by customs essentially different from those of the inhabitants of towns and villages; and that they are, in some degree, shielded by their habits, their union, and their strength, from that oppression to which some of the other classes are subject.

The interference of the king with their internal administration is continually fluctuating. Those over whom cir-

[i] Persian MS.

[k] When I asked a well-informed chief of one of these tribes, what punishment was inflicted on an adulteress, he answered, that her father, her husband, or her son, cut her to pieces.

[l] Persian MS.

cumstances give him power, allow him to do what he pleases; while the same tribe, differently situated, would revolt at the slightest infringement of their usages. By their constitution they should be governed through their chief, and the court always endeavours to render him a subservient instrument of its will: but still his influence continues, under all circumstances[m], with a force which would appear incredible, unless we have been in the habit of contemplating the tenacity with which men in such communities preserve the first and deepest impression made on their mind, of the virtue, as well as the necessity, of an inviolable attachment to their hereditary lord.

The Bukhteeâree[n], and several other tribes, can hardly be said to have entirely submitted to the Kings of Persia. Guarded by their inaccessible mountains, they continue to be ruled by their own customs, and admit of hardly any interference from the officers of government in their internal jurisdiction. They consent to furnish a body of their youth as soldiers, and to pay a small tribute, that they may obtain a share in the produce of some of the fine vallies at the foot of the hills: and every effort is made to encourage them to occupy those plains, not merely with the view of rendering them more tangible to the laws of the country, but also, by giving them an interest in the general peace and order, of preventing the frequent predatory attacks which they are in the habit of making upon their more peaceable and civilized neighbours.

The Arabian tribes along the shores and on the islands

[m] The author of a memoir on the chiefs of Khorassan, after giving an account of Jaffier Khan, the late ruler of Nishapore, then in confinement at Teheran, states, "the tribe of Byât, though treated with great kindness, still continue to desire the return of their cruel chief, Jaffier Khan; and they are not withheld by the memory of his oppression and injustice from saving all they can out of their small means, and secretly transmitting it for his support."

[n] The Bukhteeâree and Fylee tribes inhabit the ranges of mountains which stretch from Isfahan to Shuster, and thence to near Kermanshah.

of the Persian Gulf continue to follow many of the usages of their ancestors. The interference of the king or his officers in their internal rule depends upon their state of subjection; and this varies with the events which tend to weaken or strengthen his authority over that part of his kingdom. All the tribes upon the continent of Persia may, when the country is at peace, be deemed subject to the authority of the officers of the government: but these seldom exercise any control over the islands[*], even when the latter profess an allegiance to the monarch of Persia.

The principal officers of the empire, and the chiefs of tribes, who are employed or dwell at a distance, commonly have a part of their family at the capital. These hostages are always watched, but seldom strictly guarded, unless the person, for whose fidelity they are a pledge, is suspected of treason. When he actually rebels, they are sometimes put to death: but such examples are not frequent. The dread of them, however, while it retains numbers in the path of duty, makes every ruler, who is at all independent, refuse, as long as he is able to do so, to comply with this custom; his consenting to send his eldest son, or any part of his family, to remain at court, is always considered as a token of complete submission.

The condition of the principal feudatories has been noticed; although they acknowledge the paramount power of the monarch, they have always denied his right of interference in the internal government. The Waly or Prince of Georgia, whose territories have become a province of Russia, held for many years the first rank among those great tributaries. The Waly of Ardelan, in Kurdistan, still enjoys the dignity and privileges that belonged to his ancestors; exercising all the functions of a sovereign within

[*] At present, almost all these islands may be deemed independent. Kharruck is the only one in which there is a Persian garrison. The King, however, claims a right of sovereignty over them all.

the limits of his hereditary possessions. His system of government is, in its general features, the same as that established in other parts of Persia, only that his personal authority is limited by his situation; for he is checked by the fear of his superior lord, as well as by the necessity of preserving that attachment to his person which constitutes his strength.

Though there are several cities in Kurdistan, the military tribes seldom inhabit either towns or considerable villages; nor do they assemble, except for war, in large encampments. Their dwellings are often solitary; and whether they are houses or tents, it is seldom that more than a few are together. This custom, whether it arises from the nature of the country [p], or from adherence to ancient usage, retards every progress to improvement. We have evidence of the inhabitants continuing in an unchanged state for more than twenty centuries [q]. Neither the rays of civilization which enlightened Persia under Noosheerwan, nor those that shone on the neighbouring provinces of Arabia and Turkey under the most celebrated of the caliphs, ever penetrated amid the wilds of Kurdistan, though in the immediate vicinity of Ctesiphon and of Bagdad. The Kurd despised a knowledge accompanied by an effeminacy and luxury which rendered man more subject to oppression and cruelty. He preferred the savage freedom he enjoyed amid his rugged mountains, and felt a pride in the privations and hardships he was exposed to, when he regarded them as associated with his independence. It is not surprising that religion should never have made any great progress amid such a people. There is no proof of their ever having been zealous as followers of Zoroaster; and though they now profess the faith of Mahomed, they are, in gene-

[p] The Lesghees are remarkable for having habitations similar to those of the Kurds.

[q] See Vol. II. page 132.

ral, not only careless of the duties, but even of the ceremonies it prescribes. In Sennah, the capital of Ardelan, and in some other towns, there are mosques and priests; and in these, the Sherrâh, or written law, is observed nearly as in other parts of Persia. The principal distinction arises from most of the Kurds being Soonees; so that their laws are founded on the authorities respected by that sect. Among the ruder tribes the Sherrâh meets with little attention. They are governed by the usages of their forefathers, and yield an obedience to their chief, which he repays by his protection, and by exercising his authority with the utmost regard to their customs and prejudices [r].

There are several districts in Kurdistan where the inhabitants profess allegiance to the Monarch of Persia, but which are even more independent of all interference with their internal government than the province of Ardelan; because their mountains are more inaccessible. One of the most remarkable is a branch of the tribe of Hâkâry [s], who

[r] A remarkable instance of this occurred in 1810. I was encamped at a village called Zâghâ, within twenty-five miles of Sennah. The officer who attended as Mehmândâr, or entertainer, to the mission on the part of the Waly, informed me that a man of the tribe of Soorsoor (some families of which were encamped within a mile) had the day before murdered his father. "He will of course be put to death," I observed. "I do not think he will," said the mehmândâr: "he is himself the heir, and there is no one to demand the blood."—"Will not the prince take care that this parricide does not escape?"—"The Waly," he coolly replied, "cannot interfere, unless appealed to: and after all, if the affair be agitated, the murder will be compounded. Among Kurds, who are always at war, the life of an active young man is much too valuable, to be taken away on account of a dead old one!"

[s] This petty state, if we can credit the accounts we receive, has continued for centuries to enjoy more freedom than almost any other Asiatic tribe or nation. The ruler is a direct descendant from Jûz-ood-deen Sheer, a chief of the tribe of Hâkâry, who was governor of Van when Timoor attacked it. The people are represented as constant in their allegiance to this family, except when serious complaints are urged against the reigning representative. On such occasions the Agas, or heads of the different branches of the tribes, whose condition is also hereditary, assemble and summon him before

dwell in the lofty ridge of hills immediately west of the Lake of Oormeah, and near the Town of Sâlmâs in Aderbejan.

Several of the chiefs of Khorassan, who profess allegiance to the Kings of Persia, are as independent of his authority in their internal rule, as the Waly of Ardelan; but their situation differs in this essential respect: he inherits a power enjoyed by his ancestors for many centuries; theirs is of recent usurpation; and its destruction, and the subjugation of their principalities would be considered as the natural and just re-establishment of the royal authority: whereas any attempt to reduce Kurdistan would be deemed a departure from the policy of the wisest and most powerful Monarchs of Persia, who have always respected the rights of its chiefs and inhabitants: and, though some of its rulers boast a descent from the family of Mahomed, neither Arabian nor Tartar tribes have ever permanently settled in that great province.

The mode of collecting the revenue is intimately connected with the general administration of justice. The same officer sometimes presides over both: and this union of power is favourable or unfortunate for the inhabitants, according to his personal character.

them. His conduct is tried; and if a majority of voices decide that he is unfit to rule, one of the leaders places a pair of slippers before him. The chief rises, puts them on and walks out of the assembly. The next heir succeeds: but the discarded ruler retains the personal property of his family. We are assured, that all the usages of this community display the same character; and that in their internal administration the lowest individual is treated with respect by his superiors. There is an account of this tribe in the history of Kurdistan. I received some curious anecdotes of their usages from an intelligent officer who accompanied me from Tebreez and had long lived in the neighbourhood. He told me, that they were seldom engaged in internal wars: but that, recently, after the majority had decided to depose a ruler, the Aga, whose duty it was to place the slippers, had refused to do so. This had produced a division; and Abbas Meerza, the Prince Royal of Persia, had interfered in favour of the deposed chief, but had failed in his efforts to restore his authority.

The fixed revenue, which amounts at present to about three millions sterling, is chiefly derived from the produce of crown and government lands[t], from taxes and imposts on landed property, and on every species of goods and merchandise. Before the time of Nâdir Shah, a great portion of the land had been granted to the ecclesiastical establishment, which had been equally enriched by the generosity of the Seffavean kings, and by the piety of their subjects. Personal estates had also increased, during the long tranquillity Persia had enjoyed under this dynasty, to a very great extent: but Nâdir[u] seized the property appropriated to the ecclesiastical body; and amid the subsequent revolutions almost all the principal families have perished, and their estates have fallen to the crown. A very small portion of the territory which once belonged to the priests has been restored. They are at present chiefly supported by pecuniary stipends; and a deduction from the revenue is made in every province to pay the judges of the courts of Sherrâh, to keep colleges and mosques in repair, and to maintain religious establishments[x].

Crown lands are cultivated by the peasantry on terms[y]

[t] Chardin, in his account of the revenue, makes a distinction between what he terms royal domains and government lands: the former being more particularly at the disposal of the king. By the domains, in opposition to the Khâlesâh, or government lands, he means such royal estates as have been long appropriated to support palaces and certain parts of the royal household and establishment.

[u] Vide Vol. II. page 50.

[x] I have no documents for stating the exact provision made for the priesthood. The Mooshtâheds, or chief pontiffs, usually live on their own means, or have lands assigned them. If there are any *Wukf*, or charity lands, in the province, they are placed under their management. The Paish-Nâmâz, or chief officiating priests at the mosques, have often a salary of from four to twelve hundred piastres a year: but many of the most respected perform the duty gratuitously. The shaikh-ool-islâm, cauzee, &c., have all fixed salaries. In Isfahan the sums paid to such persons were estimated at ten thousand tomâns a year. The annual pay of the shaikh-ool-islâm at Shiraz was two thousand tomâns.

[y] These terms are said to have been first settled by Noosheerwan the Just. They are certainly of great antiquity.

very favourable to the cultivator. When the crop has been measured[z] by an officer appointed for the purpose, if the seed be supplied by government, it is returned; and ten per cent. of the whole is next put aside for reapers and threshers; after which the remainder is equally[a] divided between the cultivator and the king. Lands that are the property of individuals[b] pay according to their situation in respect to water. When the supply is certain, and obtained from a flowing stream, they pay twenty per cent. on the produce, after deducting seed and the allowance before stated. If the water comes from aqueducts[c], they pay fifteen per cent.; and if from wells or reservoirs, only five. The duty on estates is generally farmed by the owners, which prevents trouble and vexatious interference of the subordinate officers of the revenue.

Every encouragement is held out to the cultivators to sow those government lands, where the crops depend solely upon rain. If the cultivator finds the seed, ten per cent.[d] only is demanded for the king. Such a crop is sometimes abundant, but often fails altogether. If the land belongs to individuals, it is seldom cultivated; when it is, the proprietor pays five per cent. on the produce.

This mode of settlement applies to what is termed the

[z] The crop is measured on the ground. The expression in my Persian MS. is, "*as it stands;*" which evidently means before it is reaped.

[a] In one account it is stated, that this mode varies, and that the cultivator in some parts pays two thirds to the king.

[b] The estates of individuals are of different tenures: some free; others pay a small quit rent; and some are of a tenure not unlike our copyhold; they are held by deeds for ninety-nine years, renewable on paying the fine of a year's rent.—Chardin, Vol. V. page 382, new edit.

[c] Nothing is of greater value in Persia than water: the government constructs and keeps aqueducts in repair; but the cultivator usually pays for watering his fields and garden in a proportion exceeding the expenditure, which constitutes the right of supplying water into a source of revenue.

[d] Another MS. states twenty per cent.: but when this is so it is probable government finds the seed.

summer harvest[e]. In that of winter[f], rice is the only grain regulated by the same rules. The seed of every thing else sown at this season[g] is furnished by the cultivator. The crop is divided into three parts, of which one only is the property of the government. Private estates pay ten per cent. on winter crops.

The above are the principles by which the collection of revenue from land in most of the provinces is adjusted. Local circumstances and usages may make the government share vary in some parts; but the difference is immaterial. The compact between the owners and cultivators of land and the government is simple, and well understood by all. The former often pay a considerable proportion of their rent in kind. This is regulated by convenience, usage, and the ability of the cultivators. Some villages, where the inhabitants are poor, pay the government almost entirely in kind: but when the farmer has wealth, he generally prefers making cash payments, as he avoids, by that means, the interference of the inferior officers of the revenue. According to the general and established rule, half should be paid in money and half in kind[h].

The general mode of settling for large tracts of land does not of course apply to rich and highly manured fields, or to gardens near towns. This is the only land that is

[e] The Shutvee.

[f] Syfee.

[g] What has been said of the harvest, chiefly applies to Irak, Aderbejan, and part of Fars, where the summer crop is reaped between the middle of June and the end of July. In the more arid regions it is much earlier. At Shuster, and in almost all Khuzistan and Deishestan, the seed is put into the ground in the latter end of November or beginning of December.

[h] I find it mentioned in a note on a statement of the revenues, that for every tomân paid in money, one khurwâr, or ass-load of grain is also levied. The khurwâr of grain is a hundred Tebreez maunds, about seven hundred pounds weight; and the fixed price, when it is taken in money, as it generally is, ought to be a tomân for a khurwâr; so that the amount in kind is equal to that in money. Of late years government has often exacted a tomân and a half and even two tomâns for a khurwâr.

enclosed. It is generally rented for money, and often at a very high rate. When Persia was in a tranquil state, some of the ground near Isfahan produced more than thirty crowns a jurreeb, which is not above three quarters of an acre[i]; but this must have been either garden ground, or fields set apart for the cultivation of melons[k].

The government is always ready to dispose of waste land, particularly if it be to build upon, or to plant a garden. A heritable lease is given, subject to a small ground tax; and the fruit trees and vines become subject to a tax, which varies according to the age of the tree and the quality of the fruit. The fixed tax on fruit is very moderate[l], and this extraordinary assessment cannot be heavy; else this delightful luxury could not be raised so abundantly and so cheaply as it is throughout Persia.

Both the form and the policy of the Persian government have always disposed it to grant arable lands to the wandering tribes on the most favourable terms; but these seldom cultivate more than is necessary for their own consumption. The vast tracts of fine pasture lands allotted for their winter and summer residence, are considered as a payment in part for their military service; but a tax is levied upon families, according to their wealth and the number of their cattle and flocks[m]; it is collected by their chief, or the deputies he appoints.

[i] Chardin has given us some curious information on this subject.

[k] Melons have always been cultivated in great abundance in the neighbourhood of that capital.

[l] In a statement I received at Shiraz in 1800, from a very intelligent native, I find the tax on vineyards and fruit trees as follows:

Vineyards, *faryab*, or with "certainty of water,"	6 deenars a vine.
If *bukhs*, or "with uncertainty of water,"	5 the same.
Apple, pear, peach, &c.	20 the same a tree.
Walnuts	100 the same.

The deenar is a nominal coin, in which accounts are kept. There are a thousand to the piastre, or about five hundred to an English shilling.

[m] This duty is not always the same, but never high. In the statement I

A part of the fixed revenue is derived from ground rents of houses, rents of caravansaries, baths, shops, water-mills, manufactures [n], and duties on all kinds of foreign and home merchandise. This branch of the revenue has greatly increased since the extinction of the Seffavean family, and of that of Kerreem Khan; both of which revolutions were attended with immense confiscations. Whole streets in the principal cities, which before belonged to individuals, have become the property of the government, and are rented by its subjects. The revenue collected from shops is very considerable. When these belong to government, a rent is fixed proportionate to the gain derived by those who hire them; when they belong to individuals, the government claims twenty per cent. on their computed annual profits. There is no impost in Persia that can be called a capitation tax, strictly speaking; but the mode of collecting the ground rents and share of shop profits in towns, and that of levying the duties from the wandering tribes, is regulated by a similar principle. These imposts [o] are made according to general rules, and laid on the houses or families that pay them, not agreeably to their actual condition, but as they are rated.

The principles on which the whole of the fixed revenue is settled are just and moderate; and the system is so perfectly understood, that it is attended with neither difficulty nor oppression: but unfortunately the monarchs have

received at Shiraz I find it rated to the inhabitants of that city and district as follows:

A milch cow pays annually . .	300 deenars.
An ass.	200
A brood-mare	1000
A camel	300
A sheep	700 which appears disproportionate.

[n] This includes cloths of all kinds, glass, leather, hardware, earthenware, &c.

[o] The revenue terms, Ser Shûmâree, or numbering of individual heads, and Khânâh Shûmâree, or numbering of families, used in Persia to describe this mode of collection, shew that these duties approach to a capitation tax.

never been satisfied with the produce of this, and its justice and moderation only serve to make the people feel more sensibly the irregular and oppressive taxes they are continually exposed to. The first of these may be termed usual and extraordinary presents. The usual presents to the king are those made annually by all governors of provinces and districts, chiefs of tribes, ministers, and all other officers in high charge, at the feast of Nou Rôze, or vernal equinox[p]. These gifts are regulated by the nature of the office and the wealth of the individual, and comprise the best of the produce from every part of the kingdom. Sometimes a large sum of money is given, and this is always the most acceptable present. Every officer of high rank must make this annual offering, which is indeed deemed a part of the revenue, and as such falls ultimately on the farmers, cultivators, and manufacturers. The amount presented is generally regulated by usage: to fall short, is loss of office; and to exceed, is increase of favour. The tribute paid to the king of Persia by the princes and chiefs who own him as their paramount lord, is transmitted at this season, and may be classed under the same head with the other presents given at the Nou Rôze. The receipts from this branch are said to amount to nearly two-fifths of the fixed revenue; one governor of a province has for several years past seldom made an annual present of less than a hundred thousand tomâns[q].

[p] This usage of receiving presents on the Nou Rôze, seems to have existed in Persia from the earliest times. One of the most plausible conjectures concerning the sculptures at Persepolis supposes them to represent a procession of this kind.

[q] Mr. Morier, who saw the offerings on the feast of Nou Rôze, in 1808, states, that the paishkesh, or offering of Hajee Mahomed Hussein Khan, was "fifty-five mules, each covered with a fine Cashmere shawl, and carrying a load of a thousand tomâns." This respectable nobleman, who is minister of finance, and governor of Isfahan, and all the districts subordinate to that city, derives his power to make these splendid offerings from the most legitimate of all sources, the general improvement of the country committed to his charge.

Besides the usual tribute from dependant princes and chiefs, and the presents from officers in high station, made at the Nou Rôze, there are extraordinary presents of a less definite nature, but which are also of very considerable amount. It is not customary to collect duties in camp, but the merchants permitted to attend it are expected to give collectively a large offering in money to the king. Every person appointed to a high employment makes a present, as a token of gratitude: it is usually settled before he is nominated, and may often be deemed the purchase-money of his station. Monopolies are not unknown in Persia, but this invidious mode of increasing the revenue is not common. The produce of fines imposed by the courts of Urf, or customary law, and of involuntary presents extorted from such as are suspended or dismissed from employment, which are levied on the pretext of 'their delinquency, is very considerable: the amount annually collected from these, and other sources equally corrupt and oppressive, has been estimated at six hundred thousand tomâns, a sum equal to a fifth of the fixed revenue; but it is impossible to make any exact calculation, where the amount depends so much upon the character of the monarch.

The most oppressive of all the imposts is called Sâdir, a term which means a public requisition, and as opposed to the Malliaat, or fixed revenue, denotes taxation raised to provide for extraordinaries. If an addition is made to the army—if the king desires to construct an aqueduct or build a palace—if troops are marching through the country, and require to be furnished with provisions—if a foreign mission arrives in Persia—if one of the royal family is married—in short, on any occurrence more than ordinary, an impost is laid, sometimes on the whole kingdom, at others only on particular provinces. This is regulated by the nature of the occasion, and by a regard to its local or general extent.

The Sâdir extends to all classes. It usually bears lightest on the wandering tribes, not only because they are

the poorest, but because they are the most impatient of such taxation. It falls heaviest upon the proprietors of estates and citizens. It is, or rather ought to be, levied according to defined rules, and every person should pay the Sâdir in the same proportion as he pays the Malliaat; but the governors of provinces usually exercise an arbitrary discretion in collecting this tax, which renders it more oppressive[1]; they settle the gross amount each village is to pay, and this affords them an opportunity of shewing partiality and committing injustice. The sum derived from this source has been calculated at two-fifths of the fixed revenue; and it has thus been concluded that the receipts of the king of Persia from presents, fines, and extraordinary taxes, equal the produce of the established taxes, making the revenue of the kingdom amount to little less than six millions sterling; but only a proportion of this is paid in money into the royal treasury. A large deduction is made for the expenses of collection, and a considerable proportion is received in kind, and used for public purposes. It is also a general practice to pay the chief ministers of religion and justice, the principal officers of state, the royal household, and the army, by assignments on the public revenue of different provinces.

This account of the revenue of Persia rests upon the authority of well-informed natives: perhaps the total amount is somewhat exaggerated. The disbursements of the government cannot easily be ascertained, but we know that they are much less than the receipts. It has in general been the policy of the monarchs, as of most Asiatic despots, to amass wealth; for in all countries where there is no public credit, a full treasury is deemed essential to the security of the state.

It will be right, before we conclude this short account of

[1] This tax is often very severe upon the poorer class of cultivators, from the necessity of selling the crops upon the ground at a low price, in order to pay it. It is not unusual to see grain selling for two tomâns and a half the load, which the farmer has sold at one tomân.

the government of Persia, and of the mode of administering justice and collecting the revenues, to offer a few general observations upon the power of the monarch, and the practical effects of the whole system of internal administration.

It is difficult to describe the operation of the separate parts, or of the whole, on a system of government, exposed, like that of Persia, to continual and violent changes; but, though these changes produce a great effect on the character and condition of the nation, they neither destroy nor materially alter those rules which are established for the conduct of the administration, and which, guarded as they are by usage, by public opinion, and by religion, are seldom infringed with impunity. The government may be termed a military despotism, the action of which is regulated by a regard to the condition of its subjects, and the situation of the empire. The power of the monarch rests chiefly upon the fear he inspires. It has been well observed, that the arm of a despotic prince must be always uplifted; he must be prompt to repel foreign attack, and to repress every appearance of sedition or rebellion: for, surrounded by the ambitious and the turbulent, he can enjoy no security, and his subjects can know no peace, unless he is dreaded. Powerful nobles and high officers of the empire, must needs be arbitrary in their respective charges; and, when they cease to tremble at the supreme authority, the nation suffers a great increase of misery under a multitude of tyrants.

The chief ministers enjoy a very considerable, though indirect power, from being the medium through which all things are represented to a sovereign who generally acts from the impulse of the moment, and whose decisions must, therefore, be much regulated by the sentiments of the persons he relies upon. This kind of power of doing good or evil by secret or open communication with the king, belongs in a greater or less degree to all the officers of his government and domestics of his household; and, as the nature of

absolute power makes it impossible that persons immediately attached to the monarch should be amenable to any inferior tribunal, it follows that this class must be entirely subject to his will. It is impossible, from the shape of the government, that their condition should be other than it is: and no small proportion of the security enjoyed by the rest of the community may be referred to the danger in which all about the king continually stand; for, unless he be very weak or unjust, it is hazardous for any of his ministers or courtiers to commit violence or injustice in his name.

The governors and chiefs of tribes may be considered in nearly the same relation to the king as his ministers: and when we remember the facility which the habits of the Persian monarch afford to his subjects of preferring complaints[*], and that policy dictates attention to them, we must be satisfied that in a half-civilized community, the absolute power of the sovereign over those to whom he delegates his authority, is essential to preserve the people from the oppression and rapacity of petty rulers.

Though a great proportion of the Kings of Persia may be capricious, cruel, and unjust, we find very few examples of their exercising their prerogative, except over those whom usage and the condition of the state have placed at their disposal: but this class has of late become more numerous, from the frequency of wars and rebellions. Amid revolutions neither life nor property is safe, as the peaceable inhabitants of the country are dragged into participating in the crimes of the individuals who are aspiring to the crown; and that very weakness which compelled them to

[*] Every individual who resides at the capital, or has the means of going to it, may find an opportunity of personally communicating with the king. The usual time is at the morning salam, or "levee." A short time ago an English artillery serjeant, employed in disciplining the Persian troops, availed himself of this circumstance to prefer a complaint to the king against a paymaster, who had kept back his pay. He succeeded in his application for redress; and the proceeding, on his part, was considered perfectly regular.

acknowledge one party, too often invites the other to plunder them; but it is never considered that a monarch can be justifiable, unless under such circumstances, in seizing the property or taking the life of any of his subjects, not in his immediate employment.

The king always exercises his power as the chief magistrate of the Urf, or customary law, in his capital, and the district around it; and all civil and criminal cases, after being examined by subordinate officers, are submitted to his decision. His numerous occupations compel him, in performing this part of his duty, to trust in a great degree to others, or to form a very hasty judgment on the cases brought before him: and this summary proceeding, added to the custom of inflicting punishment in his presence, and by the hands of executioners[1] who attend his person, often gives a character of barbarity to acts of the most exemplary justice. In a country like Persia the inhabitants of the capital, who are under the immediate jurisdiction of the monarch, are generally the happiest and the best governed. Their goodwill is of more consequence to the despot than that of his other subjects; and they are treated with more lenity and consideration. They are seldom exposed to be tyrannized over by any but the sovereign: and, assuredly, of all the evils which attend absolute power, the greatest is its necessary delegation to mean and sordid agents, whose minds must, from their condition, be insensible to many of the higher motives that may be expected to influence the conduct of the chief ruler.

Many European travellers, who have resided in the capital of Persia, have felt a natural horror at the tyranny of particular sovereigns; and so have given an exaggerated picture of the condition of the country. One affirms, that

[1] The Ferāshhā-e-Ghuzzub, or executioners, (literally "servants of anger or violence,") always attend the king, and are ready at every moment to execute his commands.

"the Persians expect injustice from their kings[a];" but the idiomatic phrases adduced to support this assertion only prove that they recognise an unlimited power in their sovereign, which they will admit in no other person. The same author, whose experience was great, and whose local knowledge was minute, after detailing the caprice and cruelty of the Kings of Persia, on which the philosophers of his country have grounded many just and some erroneous opinions, concludes with the following remarkable observation:—"After all, I never saw, and never heard of, the king committing any outrageous act of violence, unauthorised by a public procedure, against any person not in the class of courtiers, or public officers of government. With respect to the latter, the danger they incur does not diminish their solicitude for employment. They listen attentively to the accounts they hear of those countries where life and property are secure; but the impression made on their minds is of the same character as that which most men receive when told of the joys of the other world. It is unaccompanied by any desire to leave that which they inhabit[*]." This writer also observes, with truth, that in a government like Persia, it is necessary to adopt the most prompt and vigorous measures when a great offender is concerned. It is obvious, that a noble of rank, (particularly the chief of a tribe,) might easily find the means of escaping punishment; and the monarch is forced, therefore, to proceed with caution, lest, in the attempt to destroy a guilty individual, he should hazard his own safety or the peace of the

[a] Chardin (Vol. V. page 219,) says that a person often exclaims, when speaking of another who is oppressive, *Pádshdee mekunnud*, "He acts the king:" if they experience violence from any one, they cry, *Mugur pádshdee tou*, "Perhaps thou art a king:" and again, when complaining of the tyranny of another, they say, *Pádshdee ba mun-kurdá-ust*, "He acted the king with me." All these expressions merely mean, that the person assumed a power which did not belong to him.

[*] Chardin, Vol. V. page 231, 232.

country. From these causes marks of favour and honorary dresses are not unusually the precursors of disgrace and death: the victim is decorated for the sacrifice; and the dagger of assassination performs the task of the sword of justice.

The actual power of the monarch depends upon the condition of his empire; and as that is continually fluctuating, it is impossible to do more than offer some general observations on the limits fixed to it by usage, and to state what the king himself recognises as the bounds of his authority, and what it is generally believed he cannot overstep without danger of serious discontent and tumult, if not of general rebellion.

The king claims, upon all occasions, as has been before stated, the right of judging the conduct of his ministers, officers, and servants, and of fining, disgracing, plundering, or putting them to death, at pleasure: but even this admitted power, which is always considerably checked by public opinion, does not extend to any interference with their religion; nor has he a right to seize or confiscate any property, which their family possessed before they entered his service, and which is guarded by legal titles, and has either been granted to, or purchased by them or their ancestors. Such property is under the peculiar protection of the Sherrâh; and the violent seizure of it would be a most tyrannical outrage. However, it continually occurs, that, when the king imposes a heavy fine upon a minister or governor of a province, whom he deems a public delinquent, he adopts rigorous measures to enforce payment, till he compels him to sell his estates, of which government is usually the purchaser; but the observance of this form, where the individual is one of the class whose persons and property are admitted to be at the mercy of the monarch, is a strong proof of the respect in which this kind of property is held. It is owing to the recent violent revolutions that so many estates have been forfeited by the flight or extinction of the

families they had belonged to: but numbers of this class can still boast the enjoyment of lands[y] that have for centuries been possessed by their ancestors.

The conduct of the kings to the ecclesiastical order has, with few exceptions, been always the same. This class is, in a great degree, exempt from tyranny: and the land which has been granted by government or by individuals for the support of mosques, colleges, and tombs, is deemed sacred, and can neither be alienated nor seized. It is true, Nâdir Shah secularized almost the whole of this property; but this measure was not only deemed indefensible, but sacrilegious: and we have no other example of so violent an act. If the sovereign be restrained by a regard to the religion he professes, and by a deference for the feeling of his subjects, from oppressing the religious order, he is no less prevented by usage and the apprehension of exciting discontent or revolt, from interfering with the established customs of the military tribes: and even the civil branches of the population may, unless in times of insurrection, be pronounced exempt from suffering directly from any tyrannical exercise of the authority of the monarch. Their lives and property are generally secure, unless from the sentence of the law: and though their judges and magistrates can impose fines, inflict corporal punishment, and condemn to death, they cannot direct landed property of inheritance to be seized or alienated, unless for the satisfaction of creditors. We cannot have a better proof of the security of private estates, than the fact that, during the latter years of the Seffavean dynasty, land sold for twenty-five and thirty years' purchase; and that all the late revolutions and the

[y] I was told by Meerza Boozoorg, the prime minister of the Prince Abbas Meerza, that his estate had been in his family several centuries; and many of his ancestors enjoyed high station. Several persons of less note have assured me, that they have inherited lands which had been for an equally long time possessed by their forefathers.

heavy imposts have never reduced it below half its former value[*].

The king nominates whom he pleases to be governors of provinces and principal collectors of the revenue: but a military tribe will only obey a leader belonging to the family of its chiefs; and the king is not always able to interrupt the regular succession. When he appoints, or, more properly speaking, supports a chief disagreeable to the tribe, their discontent and insubordination often compel him to revoke the measure. The principal magistrates of cities, who act under the governor, and those appointed to preside over different wards, must not only be natives of the city, but agreeable to the majority of the inhabitants. These officers, then, and the magistrates of towns and of villages, may almost be said to be elective. The effect of this system is to render the situation of a magistrate like that of the chief of a tribe; and we often find it hereditary in a particular family. A magistrate so chosen may occasionally bend before a storm that he cannot resist, and become an instrument of tyranny; but all his natural feelings, his own interest and that of his successors, must dispose him to use his power for the protection of his fellow-citizens; the custom, therefore, which grants to the inhabitants this right of influencing the nomination of their immediate superiors, is very effective in preserving them from some of the worst evils of despotic rule. This privilege is extended to all the principal tradesmen and artisans. In every great city each class has its head, raised by the general voice to that condition; and through him all imposts upon their particular trade or manufacture are paid, and all grievances are represented.

In no country do men enjoy more personal freedom in egard to their place of residence than in Persia. All ranks,

[*] A few years ago, land near Shiraz was sold at twelve years' purchase, which was deemed a very low price.

except those in the public service, or slaves, (who are not numerous,) may go where they choose within the kingdom, or leave it whenever they desire. No passport is required; the government never obstructs an individual following his own inclination in this particular; and the facility[a] with which men can remove from the effects of tyranny is one of their securities against oppression.

It has already been stated, that the confusion between the courts of Sherrâh and Urf, or written and customary law, has been purposely promoted, not only by the monarch, but by all who enjoy power. It is a great source of illicit emolument: for in disputed cases, (except on points expressly limited to the decision of the written law,) the favour of the king, or of the civil or military officers vested with his authority, is essential; and it is generally sought by the most corrupt means. The nature of this system varies with the character of the chief ruler, and of the persons he employs, and is more or less oppressive, as he is moderate and just, or venal and rapacious. In a country where the law, as it is termed, is administered in so summary a manner, and where decisions are given at the moment, and on a hurried examination of facts, men with the best intentions may often pronounce an unjust sentence: and those who desire to screen guilt, or to punish innocence, have the means of doing so under the cloak of justice. The principal check on the conduct of subordinate governors is an appeal to the throne, which can always be made; no person can prevent an individual from seeking that relief; and when he reaches court, he is certain of attention; for, supposing even that there is no disposition to redress the injured, an accumulation of these complaints against the governors of provinces and cities, furnishes the king and his ministers with matter of accusation, and either affords them

[a] There are some exceptions to this. The male Armenians may leave the kingdom; but they cannot remove their females without a passport, which is seldom obtained without great trouble and expense.

a pretext of removing and plundering the party accused, or of compelling him to give them a share of the spoils he has obtained by the abuse of his power. It is impossible for the most virtuous public officer to guard against these accusations, which are often brought forward by the intrigues of his enemies; and when the court is corrupt, innocence is no security. Men in high station, therefore, may be said to be compelled to use violence and extortion. They must provide themselves with the only means for satisfying the cupidity of their superiors, and saving themselves from disgrace and punishment.

The same kind of corruption pervades the collection of the revenue: but oppression is here attended with more difficulty: it is not unusual for whole villages and districts to rise against it; and when the distance prevents their going in a body to the capital, they send deputies. This proceeding is seldom adopted with a hope of obtaining redress, but it is almost certain to stop the abuse; no person, unless very powerfully supported, dares to oppress those who have carried their complaints before the king.

The situation of the public officers, from the highest to the lowest rank, appears precarious and full of anxiety and danger; yet in no country is employment more eagerly sought. It always gives consequence, and sometimes wealth; and those who attain it seem desirous of grasping as much as they can, without a flagrant violation of law and justice. The higher ranks, indeed, are in some degree restrained by a regard for their popularity, which gives them strength; and the lower, by a fear of the punishment which follows detection and exposure. The situation of the petty magistrates and collectors of the districts [b], between rapacious and violent superiors, who desire to exact more than the revenue,

[b] Every province in Persia is divided into bâllooks, or districts; to each there is a separate zaubit or manager, whose duty usually combines that of magistrate and collector.

and a rude and turbulent populace reluctant to pay even its just dues, must, however, be very miserable. A few years ago, when the prince, who is governor-general of Fars, called on the officers of his court to know what punishment he should inflict on a notorious thief, who had just been seized; "Make him," said a noble, whom age and blindness had privileged to speak freely, "the manager of a district in Fars. I can conceive no crime for which this would not be an adequate punishment."

This despotic and venal system of government has not subdued the spirit of the people; nor has it impoverished them as much as might have been expected. The ministers and chief nobles appear to enjoy affluence; and all persons in the public service seem to have ample means of supporting themselves and their families. Some of the merchants and principal inhabitants of towns possess considerable property; and among the other classes, though few are rich, hardly any are in actual want[c]. The latter may owe this exemption from penury to their fine climate and productive soil, and to their industry and frugal habits; but in Persia, as in other countries, falsehood and deceit keep pace with tyranny and injustice: and the abuses of the government, and its constant changes, have more effect on the moral than on the physical condition of the people.

Every man, indeed, complains of his poverty, and of the violence of the government; but this as often proceeds from a desire to avoid oppression, as from its actual pressure. The system is bad, and those who suffer from it naturally hate the persons who administer it; and to this feeling, destructive of all social ties between the governors and the governed, we may, in a great degree, attribute the recurrence of those internal troubles, which have for so long a period exposed Persia to a succession of civil wars and revolutions.

[c] As far as my own observation went, there are fewer beggars in Persia than in any country I ever saw.

The character of the persons entrusted with the govern ment of provinces must always have a considerable influence on the happiness and prosperity of the people. The Satraps of ancient Persia appear to have had the same power as the Beglerbegs of modern times. The Caliphs, while they held the kingdom, divided it among military leaders; and the conquerors from Tartary pursued the same system, but employed the princes of their own families in these high stations. Some of the Seffavean kings adopted this policy: but the latter among them confined their sons to the haram, as is the modern usage of Turkey: and, with the hope of increasing their revenue and of preventing rebellion, they nominated men of low birth and civil pursuits, superintendents or farmers of provinces; the consequence has been that tranquillity was obtained, but the empire weakened. Nâdir, and his immediate successors, employed military chiefs in all the principal governments; and the reigning monarch has divided almost the whole of Persia among his sons: but he places with these princes viziers or ministers, whom he considers in a great degree responsible for the internal government of the province. In some cases, a separate person is appointed superintendent of the revenue; and there is almost always an officer nominated by the crown to command the troops[d]. It is difficult to pronounce on the merits of these opposite systems: the one now pursued is certainly the most generous; but, though the conduct of royal governors, who desire to attach the people under their rule, and who are above being the mere purveyors of an avaricious court, may give present prosperity,

[d] In 1800 the Prince Hussun Ali Meerza was governor-general of Fars; Cherâgh Ali Khan was his vizier; Meerza Mahomed Khan, the son of Hajee Ibrahim, was the superintendent of the revenue; and Nâser-olla Khan Karagoozaloo was commander of the forces. In 1810 the prince continued governor-general; but Mahomed Nubbee Khan held both the office of vizier and superintendent of the revenue. Sâduk Khan, a military chief, of the Kajir tribe, commanded the troops.

the extent of the danger likely to ensue cannot be concealed. On the decease of their common parent, whom they obey from habit and duty, their condition becomes critical, if not desperate; and submission, even to an elder brother, is no security against their continuing objects of his suspicion. In such circumstances, rebellion or flight from the kingdom present the only roads to safety; and the latter is not likely to be contemplated till all hopes are abandoned of succeeding in the former.

We will conclude this Chapter on the Government of Persia, by a short view of the army; which comprises a considerable body of irregular horse, furnished by the military tribes, and commanded by their own chiefs; a numerous irregular militia, raised and supported by the provinces and principal cities; and a corps of infantry and artillery, clothed and disciplined in the European manner.

The irregular horse of modern Persia are the same kind of troops which opposed the Romans; and they have preserved not only the habits but the mode of fighting of their forefathers[e]. As the men are robust and brave, and their horses active and strong, no cavalry can be more suited for all the purposes of predatory warfare. The Persians assert, that their monarch can raise a body of eighty thousand troops of this description, who perform military service in return for grants of land and liberty of pasture. Every chief of a tribe is obliged to furnish a quota[f], proportionate to the

[e] It is true they use a carbine instead of a bow, but they still take their aim at their enemy when apparently flying from him.

[f] Horsemen are furnished in other modes. It is stated in one MS. that every possessor of a water-mill is obliged to contribute a man, mounted and equipped for public service. I am not certain that this usage still exists; but it is not more than six years since it was stated by a Persian nobleman, in a high public employment, to be one of the resources of the country; it is probable, therefore, that the obligation is recognised, and that, when the horseman is not required, the owner of the mill pays a sum of money. A similar usage prevails in many parts of Turkey.

numbers of his followers. Each horseman[g] receives provisions for himself and horse, when employed, and a small annual payment[h]. This class of the army, unless there be a prospect of plunder, or their own chief is a commander, give their services very reluctantly. They are only obliged to attend a few months in the year; and, if not engaged in active hostilities, always return home during the winter.

The king has constantly near his person a body of horse, termed by way of distinction his slaves, or royal guards. This favourite corps, which at present does not exceed three or four thousand men, is formed promiscuously from Georgian slaves, and the sons of the first nobles of Persia. They are well mounted, and well armed, at the public expense; and their pay[i] is not only better than that of the other troops, but they are employed on every service likely to add to their fortune[k].

Almost all the population of Persia is armed; and there is a militia in every part of the country, which is formed

[g] The horsemen are furnished by the families of a tribe, according to established custom. Sometimes one family furnishes several horsemen, at others only one; and two or three small families are often charged with the support of one mounted soldier. It is common to find substitutes, where there is no youth in the family fit for service.

[h] This seldom exceeds five or six tomâns a year, and is paid by an assignment on the revenue, which the receivers sometimes discount at a considerable loss. Every horseman has also an annual allowance of two ass-loads of grain. The officers have a larger pay than the men; but few receive more than fifteen or twenty tomâns a year, and four or five ass-loads of grain. The ass-load is computed at 700lbs. and its regulated value, if the government pay in money, is one tomân.

[i] They receive from twenty to thirty tomâns a year: and as this is usually given in an assignment upon the revenue, and they are allowed to go in person to receive it, they almost always exact more than their due. This is not difficult: the very name of Gholam Shah, or one of the king's personal guards, throws a village or district into alarm.

[k] Every prince of the blood employed in a separate government has a small body of Gholams, or personal guards, who are on the same footing, in regard to their pay, equipments, and employment, as those of the king.

equally from men of the wandering tribes, and from the inhabitants of cities and villages. Its usual duties are to defend its home, and to aid the police. They are maintained by the province, town, or village, they belong to and are liable to be called out on any emergency: but when employed with the army, or in distant garrisons, they receive pay from the government[1]. The number of this registered militia is stated to exceed a hundred and fifty thousand. They provide their own clothing and arms. The former is the common dress of the country: the latter usually consists of a matchlock, sabre, and dagger. This militia has no further discipline than that of obeying their own officers: and neither the men of this class, nor the irregular horse, will submit to be commanded by any but those members of their own body whom they deem their superiors.

Before the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, the only army of Persia was the irregular horse and the common infantry or militia. That monarch, from the desire of opposing the Turkish janizaries, and of checking the overgrown power of the khans, or chiefs of tribes, formed a corps of twelve thousand infantry, and a rude park of artillery. He also raised a body of twelve thousand horse, commanded by the favorite officers of his court. Through the aid of this force, formed indiscriminately from men of the military tribes and Georgian slaves, and entirely dependent upon the monarch, Abbas and his immediate successors were able to diminish, and ultimately to destroy the power of the great khans, whose followers had before constituted the whole force of the kingdom; these were first reduced to thirty thousand men, and ultimately so broken and discouraged, that they ceased to be formidable either to the monarch or his enemies. The spirit and strength of this branch of the army

[1] Their pay, when employed, is from five to seven tomâns a year, and from two to three ass-loads of grain.

has been revived by the turbulence and war with which Persia has been afflicted during the last century: the army of Aga Mahomed Khan consisted of irregular horse and infantry, a few unwieldy pieces of cannon, and a number of zumbooruks [m], or camel swivels: but the present monarch, with a view of opposing the Russians, and of strengthening his internal government, has formed a body of regular infantry and artillery [n], which already amount to twenty

[m] This name is derived from zumboor, or wasp. The terminating k marks the diminutive, and these swivels may be called little wasps.

[n] The disciplined infantry consists of two great divisions, the Surbâz or the resolute, and Jânbâz, or the contemners of life. The former, containing twelve corps of a thousand men each, has been raised and is supported by the prince Abbas Meerza, the heir apparent. It is composed of men of particular tribes and districts. There are two regiments of the tribe of Affshâr, two of that of Shakâkee, two of Mârândee, one of the inhabitants of Erivân, one of those of Tebreez and its vicinity, one of Kârâdâghee, one of Kangooloo, one of Mookuddoo, and one of Dumbâlloo. All the men in this division are natives of Aderbejan, the government of their royal commander. The prince Abbas Meerza has also raised a regular brigade of cavalry, of twelve hundred, and a corps of horse-artillery sufficient to man twenty field-pieces. Both these bodies are formed of men from the different military tribes. The whole was first disciplined by French officers, and afterwards by English. It has chiefly owed its efficiency to the character of Abbas Meerza, who has laboured to assimilate it in appearance and equipments to the regular armies of Europe. The pay of these troops is superior to that of any other class in Persia. That of the officers is from forty to five hundred tomâns a year: and the common soldiers receive ten tomâns, besides certain articles of dress, and rations when on service. The different regiments are willing to be commanded by European officers, but not so by Persians of a different tribe. It has, however, been the policy of Abbas Meerza to subdue this spirit; and he has placed some of his favorite officers in the charge of corps formed of different tribes. As an additional encouragement to this new branch of the army, crown lands have been granted to the soldiers on more favourable terms than to any other tenants.

The Jânbâz, who are more immediately attached to the king, are nominally equal in number to the Surbâz, but their real strength is not computed at more than eight or nine thousand men. This body is not so well paid, clothed, or disciplined, as that under the prince. It is formed in the same manner of distinct tribes. Among these are two regiments of Bukhteeârees: and these rude mountaineers have been reported by the English officer employed to discipline them, as more tractable and intelligent than any other corps in the service.

thousand men: and a part of these new troops, who have been latterly trained by English officers, is clothed, armed, and paid by the government, and established on a footing quite distinct from that of the militia.

There is no subject of such importance to any country as the constitution of that army which is to preserve its national independence. The military force of a kingdom must be of a character congenial to that of the government, or it cannot be efficient for its defence. A barbarous despotism is always in danger of perishing by the means which created and support it: and the violence it must use to preserve its existence, keeps its subjects in a rude state; for they will neither labour to produce what force may wrest from them, nor abandon any of those defences which their personal habits, their social union, or their local situation, afford them, against tyrannical power. In civilized communities military tribes cannot be allowed to exist, as they are constituted on principles at variance with such an order of society. In such, therefore, the army is formed from all ranks of subjects; and the force of example and of discipline supplies the want of those habits and sentiments which give energy to the warlike inhabitants of a ruder country: but one consequence of this condition is, that a nation almost entirely entrusts its safety to its army. If that be conquered, it falls; the remainder of the people cannot become soldiers in a day; and from their occupations and peaceable habits they are incapable of that irregular, but effective resistance, which a population of a different character continues to offer to invaders, long after armies have been defeated, and their cities taken.

The despotic monarchs of uncivilized countries are continually desiring to have all the advantages of those permanent establishments, which give prosperity and strength to a well-regulated government, and hoping to attain these, particularly a disciplined army, without any sacrifice of their absolute power. These efforts to obtain objects which are

incompatible, may succeed so far as to add for the moment to the internal tranquillity of the country, by checking or subduing the turbulent spirit and ambition of feudatory lords and their warlike followers: but a total change in the government must take place, before the new system of defence can do more than paralyze the old. An army cannot be maintained in a state of discipline and efficiency for any length of time, unless its pay be regular, and its equipments complete: and this can never be the case, except in a state where the succession to the throne is settled, where the great majority of the population are of peaceable habits, and where establishments are permanent, and the laws respected, and administered upon principles well understood, and not liable to be altered at the will of the sovereign, and of his delegates. That a regular army, by the influence of its example, and habits of order, may be instrumental in promoting civilization, there can be no doubt; but this change must coincide with many other reforms, or every effort to render it effectual to the great end of national defence will prove abortive, and terminate in disappointment.

The reigning king of Persia has been disposed to try this system, by observing the advantages the Russians derived from their discipline, and believing that his subjects, if clothed, armed, and trained in the same manner, would be more equal to a contest with that nation; and he has probably seen with satisfaction the growth of a force, calculated, from its formation, to increase his power over the more turbulent part of his subjects: but it is perhaps fortunate for his kingdom, that this plan has not yet proceeded so far as to have seriously injured either the feelings or the efficiency of that irregular army, to which Persia (while her government remains unaltered) must trust principally for her defence against the attack of any European power. The means this nation possesses for resisting such an attack are far from inconsiderable; but they would not be improved

by the partial introduction of a new military system. They consist chiefly of natural obstacles, which nothing but a long time and many radical changes could overcome. The great proportion of the inhabitants must be civilized before they could be subdued. Neither the soil, nor the productions, are of a nature to invite conquest: and the internal condition of Persia, and its position relatively to the most warlike and barbarous nations of Asia, would place the European state, which made such an attempt, in a situation of more difficulty and embarrassment on the day when it appeared to be accomplished, than it was in on the day when it commenced.

Chapter XXII.

THE CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, AND POPULATION, OF PERSIA; THE APPEARANCE OF ITS CITIES AND VILLAGES; THE PROGRESS OF ITS INHABITANTS IN THE SCIENCES, FINE ARTS, AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

Persia, now that Georgia is separated from it, may be said to extend from the twenty-sixth to the fortieth degree of north latitude, and from the forty-fifth to the sixty-first degree of east longitude. There is, perhaps, no country of the same extent which has a greater diversity of climate. This difference, however, is more dependent on the elevation and soil, than on the distance from the equator. In the southern part of the kingdom, which includes the districts of Kerman, Lâristan, Fars, and Khuzistan, between the mountains and the shores of the Persian Gulf, the

heat* in summer is very great; and it is increased by the sandy and barren plains, which present to the traveller nearly the same prospects as those of Arabia.

* The following table of the mean temperature of Abusheher, which lies about the middle of this tract, is taken from observations made by Mr. Jukes in 1803.

MONTH.	Temperature.			REMARKS.
	Sun-rise.	Two P. M.	Nine P. M.	
January	58	65	62	Prevailing winds northerly; violent thunder and lightning on the 19th; little rain during this month; distant mountains white with snow.
February	62	66	63	An unusual quantity of rain this month; very tempestuous weather, with southerly winds.
March	65½	69	67¼	Pleasant weather; a good deal of rain.
April	72	76¼	73¾	Pleasant weather; northerly wind prevailing.
May	80½	85¼	82¼	Distant mountains no longer covered with snow; on the 31st the thermometer rose to 110, in a tent, with a fly. Some rain this month, and thunder and lightning.
June	86¼	93	88¼	No rain; prevailing winds W. N. W.; light breezes beginning to blow from the land during the night.
July	89¼	98	93	No rain; partly regular land winds after nine P. M. till morning; prevailing winds northerly; dews at night towards the end of the month.
August	85	100	89	No rain; north-west winds prevailing; dews at night; thermometer one day in tents up at 115, with a south-east wind; exceedingly oppressive.
Septem.	82¼	95	86¼	No rain; heavy dews; north-west winds prevailing.
October	75¼	87½	78	A very little rain on the 12th; mornings and evenings at the end of the month pleasant; winds variable, chiefly northerly.
Novem.	63	75	68	Stormy, with thunder, lightning, and rain; distant mountains covered with snow; at the end of the month pleasant weather.
Decem.	54	65¼	63	South-easterly winds, and sometimes violent; the weather however usually very pleasant.

Mr. Jukes made observations on the climate of Abushehe in succeeding years, and found them nearly correspond with the above.

The hot winds, known under the name of Summoom in Asia, and of Sirocco in Europe, are neither frequent nor attended with danger in this region; which is probably owing to the narrowness of the space between the sea and the mountains. During the first two months of summer a strong north-westerly wind prevails over the whole tract; which, at times, blows with such violence that it brings clouds of a light impalpable sand from the opposite shore of Arabia, a distance of more than two degrees. In the autumn the heats are more oppressive than in summer; but in winter and spring the climate is delightful. It is never very cold, and snow seldom falls on the southern side of the range of mountains which divide this from the other parts of Persia. The rains, which are not heavy, fall in the winter, or early in the spring. The prevailing winds are from the north-west and south-east; and rain is almost always accompanied by the latter, which, though often very violent, hardly ever continues above three or four days at a time. Some parts of the interior of Kerman and Lâristan are subject to extreme heats, particularly the districts of the latter bordering on the Desert of Seestan.

The town and district of Shiraz, and the other parts of Fars above the mountains, enjoy a fine climate, and are neither subject to the oppressive heats of the lower and more southern provinces, nor to the severity of cold experienced in the more elevated and northern[p]. The temperature in this part of Fars varies according to the elevation of

[p] The summer at Shiraz is warm, but the heat is never excessive; and the nights, during the hottest weather, is cool and pleasant. In 1800, on one of the hottest days of June, Fahrenheit's thermometer at noon was at 94° in the house, and 100° in a tent. In May 1810, it never rose at noon above 88°, nor was below 74°. In the morning, at eight, it generally stood about 60°. In autumn the heat continued; but in winter it became cold, the thermometer falling considerably below the freezing point. As late as March there was often a hoar frost upon the ground. April is a delightful month, the thermometer at sunrise being generally from 50° to 55°, at two p. m. 80° to 84°, and at nine p. m. about 64°.

the different vallies; but neither the heat nor the cold is excessive.

The soil in the interior of Fars is in general rich and productive. There are few large streams, but an abundance of rivulets; and while its more mountainous districts afford excellent pasture, the vallies near Shiraz and the other towns produce almost every kind of grain and fruit in great abundance.

As we proceed northward into Irak, the climate improves; and Isfahan, once its capital, and still its principal city, is placed in the happiest temperature [q]. Its inhabitants are strangers to the heat felt during some of the summer months at Shiraz; yet their winter is hardly more severe. Excepting a few weeks in the year, the sky is unclouded and serene. The rains are never heavy, and the snow seldom lies long on the ground. The air is so pure and dry that the brightest polished metal may be exposed to it without being corroded by rust. The regularity of the seasons here appears extraordinary to a person accustomed to a more uncertain climate; for they change perceptibly almost to the hour. When spring commences, there is no spot in the world where Nature assumes a lovelier garb: the clearness of the streams, the shade of the lofty avenues, the fragrant luxuriance of the gardens, and the verdant beauty of the wide-spreading fields, combine with the finest climate to render it delightful; and we are almost disposed to agree with the representation which describes it as having an intoxicating effect upon the senses [r].

[q] Mr. Jukes states that from the average of twenty-seven days, including the end of May and the beginning of June, the thermometer at sunrise, was 56°, at two p. m. 87°, and at nine p. m. 67°.

[r] The Persians have always boasted of the climate of this capital. A merchant, who had travelled to every quarter, was residing at Delhi: on being asked by the Emperor of India which he thought the best spot in the world, he answered, "My own house."—"Your own house!" replied the emperor, disappointed at not receiving the flattery he had anticipated.—

The northern cities of Irak do not enjoy so favourable a climate. The country about Hamadan is very mountainous, and the winter severe: while the cities of Cashan [s] and Koom, on the verge of deserts, are exposed to heat almost as oppressive in summer, as the countries on the shores of the Gulf. Teheran [t], the king's residence, lies immediately under the range of mountains which divides Irak from Mazenderan, and is exposed to great vicissitudes of climate, and not deemed salubrious.

In Aderbejan the summer is warm, and the winter [u] very

"Yes, please your majesty," was the reply; "and I trust I shall prove it to your satisfaction, You will allow that the fourth climate [*] is the finest on the earth."—"I do," said the emperor.—"Irak is admitted, I believe, to be the finest province in that climate, and Isfahan is the first city in Irak. Now Saadut-abad is undoubtedly superior to every other ward in Isfahan, and my house is the best in Saadut-abad." The emperor smiled, approving both of his logic and his patriotism.

[s] The extraordinary difference of climate between this city and the neighbouring high Valley of Kohrood has been already noticed.—Vol. I. page 3.

[t] The mean temperature of Teheran in April, by Fahrenheit's thermometer, was 66° at noon. In May it was in the morning 67°; at two p. m. 76°; and at ten p. m. 72°: but the summer is subject to excessive heats; and the winter is very cold. The climate of this city and its neighbourhood is subject to more sudden changes than any other part of Persia. At Dhaung, about 68 miles from Teheran, on the 13th of June, 1810, Fahrenheit's thermometer, which had been at noon 92°, fell at three p. m. to 60°; and at eight p. m. the wind set in from the north-west, and it suddenly became as cold as in winter. The difference in the thermometer between noon and twelve at night was about sixty degrees. The north-west wind which had caused this great change, is sometimes called Baud-e-Shaheryâr, but oftener Baud-e-Caucâsân, or the wind from Caucâsân, a mountainous district to the north of Cazveen. This wind is common in winter, but not in summer; and a storm, when it lasts any time, destroys all the fruit, and does great injury to the grain.

[u] Tebreez, the capital of this province, lies in north latitude 38° 10′. Near this city in June 1810, we found the thermometer sometimes 68° at sunrise, 94° at two p. m. and 56° at ten p. m. The wind blew strong from the eastward. The following account of the climate there is taken from a journal kept by Mr. Campbell during the winter of 1808. On

[*] By the geography of the ancients, the only system known in Persia, the earth is divided into seven climates.

severe: and in parts of Kurdistan, though situated more to the south, so great is the effect of its elevation, that the winter may be said to commence with the autumn[x] of the surrounding country.

The northern provinces, Ghilan and Mazenderan, have like the southern, a cold and a warm region. The former is the higher or mountainous part bordering on Irak and Aderbejan; and the latter, the plains along the Caspian. Both these provinces abound in forests and rivers, which are rare in almost every other part of Persia. Silk is cultivated in Ghilan, and in some parts of Mazenderan; but the latter is most celebrated for its rice, which is of a very superior quality; and its producing this grain in abundance is a proof that its soil and climate are essentially different from that of the other parts of Persia. The rains both here and in Ghilan are frequent and heavy, and much of the lower country is described as very damp and unhealthy.

The great province or kingdom of Khorassan contains every variety of climate: all the districts bordering on the

"On the twentieth of October we had a heavy fall of snow, which covered the surrounding country; but it did not remain long upon the ground, for the weather again became mild, and we had no excessive cold until the middle of December: from which period till the end of January, the thermometer, when exposed to the air at night, never rose above zero; and in our rooms at mid-day seldom stood above 18°. January was far the coldest month. The water became solid almost instantaneously in the tumblers on the dining-table. The ink was constantly frozen in our inkstands, though the tables were close to the fire. For at least a fortnight not an egg was to be had, all being split by the cold. Some bottles of wine froze, though covered with straw; and many of the copper-ewers were split by the expansion of the water frozen in them. Towards the end of February the weather became comparatively mild; but on the first of May we had a fall of snow, and such cold weather, that it destroyed the vegetation: afterwards the weather became very warm, and they began to cut their corn on the fifteenth of July."

[x] I have before stated, (Vol. I. page 4,) that on the plain of Hubatoo in Kurdistan, on the 17th of August 1810, the water froze, and the thermometer was at 38° at sunrise. This plain is in latitude 36° north.

desert which stretches from Irak to Seestan are arid, and subject to extreme heats: and in some parts the inhabitants, during a few weeks in summer, are compelled to avoid exposure, lest they should be destroyed by the pestilential winds, or buried in the clouds of sand[y], with which they

[y] Captain Pottinger, who, in April 1810, passed over a part of the desert which stretches into Balochistan, has the following interesting observation on the subject.

"The soil (if such it may be called) is a very light red sand; the particles of it when taken in the hand, are scarcely more than palpable: the whole is thrown (most probably by winds) into a confused mass of waves of different dimensions, principally running from east to west. Many of these are very remarkable in their formation. On the opposite side to that on which the wind blows, where they often rise nearly perpendicular to a very considerable height, they have at a distance the appearance of a new brick-wall: the side towards the point from which the wind usually blows, (N. W.) slopes off with a gradual declivity to the base (or near it) of the next or preceding wave, which rises in the same extraordinary manner, so as to leave a hollow or path between them, the waves varying in height from ten to twenty feet on each side.

"I had considerable difficulty and fatigue in getting my camels over these waves, especially where we had to ascend the perpendicular or leeward side of them: in several instances we were obliged to desist from the attempt, and go round until a more favourable place or turn in the wave offered. On the sloping or windward side the camels got up pretty well; and as soon as they found the top of the wave giving way with their weight, (which it invariably did if of any size,) they dropt on their knees, and in that manner gradually descended with the sand, which, luckily for us, was so light and loose, that the first camel made a sufficient path for the others to follow without difficulty. This impediment, however annoying, was nothing to the distress suffered, not only by myself and people, but by the camels, from the floating or moving particles of sand; a circumstance I am quite at a loss to account for. On its first appearance, the desert seemed, at a distance of half a mile or less, to be a flat plain from six inches to a foot higher than the summit of the waves. This vapour or cloud appeared to recede as we advanced, and at times was formed completely round us, conveying a most distressing sensation; at the same time we were imperceptibly covered with small sand, which, getting into our eyes, mouths, and nostrils, caused considerable irritation, and was accompanied by severe thirst, greatly increased by the intense heat of the vertical sun, whereby the sand was so heated as to blister our feet, though we had shoes on. My guide said, those who had seen these floating sands, supposed that the violent heat caused the particles to rise, and that they moved through the atmosphere: but as it was per-

are often accompanied: but Khorassan notwithstanding may be said to possess a fine and healthy climate.

With the exception of the provinces on the Caspian, Persia, though its climate is very various, has everywhere the same dry and pure atmosphere. It has hardly any great rivers, and does not abound in lesser streams, or springs. Hence it has few trees, excepting those which are cultivated. Some of its salubrity is perhaps owing to this cause; it is free from those vapours and exhalations which, though nourishing to vegetable, are often noxious to animal life: but this want of wood, while it diminishes the beauty of the country, is a most serious inconvenience to its inhabitants: and there is justice in the remark of an intelligent Indian, who, on hearing some comparisons between Persia and India injurious to the latter, exclaimed: "You Persians are always boasting of your climate; but yet you have neither shade to shelter you from the sun in summer, nor fuel to save you from the cold of winter!" The temperature of the interior provinces however is delightful and healthy; though several parts of the kingdom are certainly subject to all the extremes of heat and cold, and others are far from salubrious [*].

The soil of Persia varies, from the sandy and unproductive plains on the Persian Gulf, to the rich clayey soil on the Caspian; but it almost everywhere requires water to render it fruitful: and from this cause, more than any other,

fectly still, so far as I could judge, I doubt the correctness of the guide's ideas on the subject; although I certainly remarked that this phenomenon was more common during the heat of the day, than either in the morning or evening; indeed I cannot say I ever saw it at either of the latter times."

[*] The natives of the more arid regions, particularly of the provinces on the Persian Gulf, have almost all complaints in their eyes, occasioned in part by the constant glare of sunshine, and the absence of vegetation; but more perhaps by the want of that cleanliness, which in such climes is beyond everything else conducive to health. Fevers are also frequent in this quarter, but not so much so as in some of the north-western provinces. Irak, Khorassan, and the inland parts of Fars, are among the healthiest parts of Persia: but throughout the robust frames and healthy appearance of the natives are proofs in favour of the climate: it is rare to meet with weakly or deformed persons.

have the frequent invasions tended so greatly to diminish the produce, and check the population of the country. The destruction of a few water-courses, which have been made with great labour and expense, changes a verdant valley into a desert plain.

Few countries can boast of better vegetable[a] productions, or in greater variety. The gardens vie in beauty and luxuriance with any in the world; but from the parts which are highly cultivated, we may imagine the prosperity Persia might attain to under a just and settled government. Some of its finest and most extensive vallies, which are covered with the remains of cities and villages, are consigned to wandering tribes, and feed their cattle and flocks; and one may travel for a hundred miles, through regions once covered with grain, without seeing more than the few scattered fields deemed sufficient to furnish food for the families which have the range of the domain, and to give an annual supply of green shoots[b] to fatten their horses.

Persia does not abound in valuable minerals; iron and lead, however, are found in many parts. The natives boast that there are also mines[c] of silver and gold; but these have never been worked to any advantage. Persia has always been indebted to other countries for the precious metals: and it is remarkable, that among a people, whose sovereign deems the right of coining his highest privilege, foreign coins should form a considerable part of the currency[d]. No gems of any value are found except the tur-

[a] I took great pains to introduce the potato into Persia; and the soil in many parts proved very favourable to it.

[b] The first shoots of the barley, termed khusseel, are cut in the spring, for the horses.

[c] I have been informed that a mine of gold was discovered in Fars, and one of silver in Aderbejan; but the ores were not in sufficient quantities to pay for working them.

[d] The Turkish piastre, the ducat, and the Venetian, are among the coins current in Persia.

kois[e]. The Gulf of Persia has several pearl fisheries, particularly that near the Island of Bahrein: but we can hardly consider these as belonging to Persia; for though its monarchs have always claimed the sovereignty of this sea, they have never had a navy to contend with the Arabian rulers of the opposite shore.

Among the tame animals[f] of Persia, the camel, the mule, and the horse, are the most useful and the most excellent. Oxen, which are only used to till the ground, are not abundant; nor are they remarkable for their size or beauty: but in a country where there are neither navigable rivers nor wheel carriages, it is natural that those animals, which are alike essential for the intercourse of peace and the operations of war, should be the object of peculiar care. In all those parts where the soil is arid and sandy, and which are exposed to great heats, camels are preferred for carrying burdens to all other animals. In some districts[g] of Khorassan they constitute the chief wealth of the inhabitants: but in almost all the other provinces mules are in more general use; and their extraordinary strength and activity, combined with their power of enduring fatigue, places this animal next to the horse in the estimation of the Persians, and their breed is an object of hardly inferior care.

A variety of horses are produced in Persia. The inhabitants of the districts on the Gulf still preserve those races

[e] The best turkoises are found in a mine in the mountains near Nishapore, in Khorassan.

[f] The elephant can no longer be numbered among the tame animals of Persia, as there are not above three or four in the kingdom, which have been sent as presents to the king. It is not probable that the elephant was ever indigenous to Persia: but there is no doubt that, from the most early times, they were known and used in war by its inhabitants; and we may conclude, from the sculpture at the Tauk-e-bostan, which was undoubtedly executed in the reign of Baharam the Fourth, that numbers of this noble animal swelled the pomp of the Sassanian monarchs.

[g] The Arab tribes in the countries between the Persian Gulf and the mountains breed a number of camels; but these are of an inferior kind to those produced in Arabia and many provinces of India.

pure which their ancestors brought from the opposite shore. In Fars and Irak they have a mixed breed from the Arabian, which, though stronger, is still a small horse compared with either the Turkuman or Khorassan breed, the most prized by the soldiers[h]. Both these have also a great portion of Arabian blood: but the original animal of the country where they are reared being larger, and the pasture finer, they attain to greater size and strength. There are perhaps no horses in the world capable of enduring more fatigue than the Turkuman; and when trained, as they usually are, for predatory incursions, they carry their riders for days together the most surprising distances[i]. The Persians were taught to value this race of animals by the inroads of the tribes who bred them; and who used to issue in parties of twenty and thirty from their plains, on the east of the Caspian, and to plunder the villages around the cities of Cashan and Isfahan.

Sheep are very abundant in Persia. The wealth of the wandering tribes consists in their flocks: but they give no attention to improving the breed of this useful animal, which affords them food, and some of the most essential articles of raiment. Though dogs are deemed unclean by Mahomedans, the qualities of this faithful animal have overcome every prejudice; and in Persia, as in other countries, they are admitted to a companionship with man. They are chiefly cherished by the wandering tribes: they watch their flocks, guard their tents, and aid them in their field sports. Some of the dogs used in the chase are among the most beautiful of their species.

[h] The price of horses varies extremely. The common horse is always to be purchased for from fifteen to forty pounds: fine horses, particularly of the Turkuman or Khorassan breed, are in general very dear; a hundred pounds is a common price, and sometimes much more is paid. They are often valued more from their breed than their appearance.

[i] When I was in Persia, in 1800, a horseman on a Turkuman horse, brought a packet of letters from Shiraz to Teheran, a distance of five hundred miles, within six days.

Like every country of which many parts are desolate, Persia abounds with wild animals; among which are the lion, the wolf, the jackall, the fox, the hare, the wild ass, the argali or wild sheep, the mountain goat, and deer of various kinds. We also find almost all the birds common in countries in the same latitudes.

It is impossible to calculate the population of Persia, from any materials we yet possess; and we are taught to be diffident in offering a conjecture on this subject, by the difficulties in cases where there appear to be all the means for forming a correct opinion. The calculations of the Persians themselves are exaggerated beyond all belief. In a manuscript which professes to be taken from state papers in the reign of Shah Sultan Hoossein, and which details the numbers of the different tribes and citizens, the total amount is stated at upwards of two hundred millions. Chardin, who made his estimate near a century earlier, rates it at about forty millions; but Pinkerton, concluding that the population of Persia and Candahar does not exceed that of Asiatic Turkey, computes it at ten millions; of which he thinks four may be allotted to Candahar, and six to what he terms Western Persia, or, in other words, to the present kingdom: and this estimate is probably not very remote from the truth. It gives about a hundred to the square mile; and, though some parts may far exceed this, several large tracts of desert are totally uninhabited.

There are many and powerful checks upon population in Persia: the unsettled state of the government, its oppression, the continual civil and foreign wars; and above all others, the debauchery and vices of a great proportion of the inhabitants, and the consequent neglect of their offspring. But, on the other hand, when we consider the salubrity of the climate, the cheapness of provisions [k], the rare occur-

[k] Barley is often sold at a farthing a pound, and wheat on the average is not more than a third dearer. A cow costs from sixteen to twenty shillings; a good sheep from six to eight; a goat from two to four: other articles of provision are in proportion.

rence of famine, the bloodless character of the civil wars, the obligation to marry, and the comparatively small number of prostitutes, we may conclude that the population has not diminished so much within the last century as is generally supposed. Great changes have taken place in the condition of some cities, and many numerous tribes have removed from their former abodes; but in most cases they have only been transplanted to other parts of the kingdom. Within the last twelve years the number of the citizens of Isfahan has nearly doubled[1], in consequence of the excellent local administration, which has induced its former inhabitants to return from the villages near the mountains, where they had taken shelter from oppression.

In Persia, as in other parts of Asia, male offspring are desired beyond all other blessings, even by the lowest ranks; but female children, though not equally esteemed, cannot be deemed a burden on their parents, in a country where celibacy is unknown, and where the poorest are seldom in want of food. Besides, in all Mahomedan countries charity is so strictly enjoined as a religious duty, that a considerable portion of the superfluities of the rich is always distributed among the poor: and this must have its effect in encouraging population, which will always keep pace with the means of subsistence. The circumstance too that Persians are allowed to emigrate at pleasure to adjacent countries, where many of them find profitable employment, is also calculated to add to their numbers, as it removes one check to their increase. Though the population has, perhaps, diminished in a considerable degree since the invasion of the Affghans, it has increased within the last twenty years, and may be said to be rapidly increasing; but this only applies to the Mahomedan inhabitants. The despised

[1] The population, when it was the capital of the Seffavean Kings, was, if we credit the European travellers who visited it, between six and seven hundred thousand. In 1800 it was not supposed to exceed a hundred thousand; it is now calculated at nearly two hundred thousand.

Jews have much decreased in number; and the persecuted Guebres, who are confined to a quarter of the city of Yezd, are probably over estimated when computed at four thousand families. The colony of Armenians, settled in a suburb of Isfahan, which formerly amounted to two thousand five hundred families, some of them of great opulence, do not now count five hundred, none of whom are wealthy; and this race has diminished in a still greater proportion elsewhere. The Armenians in Persia are calculated, in an estimate made by order of the Bishop of Julfa, to amount to 12,383 souls, not more than a sixth of their number before the Affghan invasion [m].

Persia has in all ages been remarkable for the magnificence of its cities. Isfahan, which was for several centuries the capital, though it has ceased to be the royal residence, is still the most populous of them. When seen from a distance, the lofty palaces, and the domes of the numerous mosques and colleges, derive additional beauty from being half veiled by shady avenues and luxuriant gardens. Though the first impression be weakened by a nearer view, and by contemplating the ruins of former grandeur, enough remains to excite great admiration. The fine bridges over the Zainderood are still in good repair; almost all the colleges have been preserved; many of the former palaces are yet perfect; and some new ones have been erected by the governor, Hajee Mahomed Hoossein Khan, as if to tempt the monarch to make this city once more his residence. No buildings can be more striking than some of these palaces. The front room or hall is in general very open, and supported by pillars, carved and gilded in the most exquisite manner; while the large glass windows, through which it receives a mellow light, are curiously stained with a variety of colours. Before each there is an

[m] I owe this estimate to Captain Frederick, who obtained it from the Bishop of Julfa. The statement is very minute, and has every appearance of being correct.

space, with a fountain, near which the domestics stand to watch the looks and words of their lord, who is generally seated at one of the windows.

The Châr-Bâgh, or the great avenue, which has received the name of the Four Gardens, has already been described [n]. Several of the private palaces, built on the borders of this avenue, though uninhabited for more than a century, are still in good repair, and their appearance adds to the beauty of the city. The style of the architecture is light and pleasing, though neither regular nor magnificent; and, at a distance, they have a very picturesque effect, from being surrounded with gardens and fine avenues.

Every principal market in Isfahan is covered with an arched roof; and, while ample room is left upon an elevated space on each side for the display of goods, there is a road in the centre for passengers, whether on foot or horseback. The principal caravansaries or inns are excellent solid buildings; and many of the public baths are very splendid, of great size, and paved with marble. The private houses are in general good; those inhabited by the governor and other public officers, or opulent merchants, almost vie with the palaces. Like all Asiatic houses, they present no appearance outwardly but that of high and dead walls, without aperture or window; one large door or gate is usually the only approach. In the interior there is a court, and this, if large, is laid out in walks, the sides of which are planted with flowers and refreshed by fountains. Into this court all the principal apartments of the mansion which are inhabited by men open; and adjoining, but distinct from this court, is a smaller one, around which are the inner apartments belonging to the females of the family. To promote a free circulation of air in summer, every house of this description has a high triangular building [o], which rises far above the

[n] Vol. I. p. 420.

[o] This ventilator is termed Baudgeer, literally a wind catcher.

terraced roof, and is open at the top; it receives the wind in whatever direction it blows, and by this means the apartments are ventilated: in winter these are warmed by stoves, which are constantly supplied with burning charcoal. Almost every dwelling of any consequence in Isfahan has a garden; this, while it adds to the salubrity and beauty of the city, greatly increases its extent, and reconciles us to the account, that in its more prosperous days, its walls were twenty miles in circumference [p].

Teheran can as yet boast of no splendid edifices except the palace. Kerreem Khan ornamented Shiraz with a bazar or market, equal, if not superior, to any at Isfahan: but Shiraz has not many public buildings; and as there are few gardens and no avenues within its walls, its bare mud terraced houses, when viewed at a distance, give it more the appearance of a ruined, than a flourishing city [q]. Hamadan, so famous under its ancient name of Ecbatana, has few beauties to attract the traveller. The small dome which canopies the remains of Mordecai and Esther, and the modest tomb of the celebrated physician Avicenna, stand near the centre of this city. The former continues to be an object of veneration to the Jews, and the latter is visited by all travellers who respect the memory of learning and genius. Many of the other cities of Persia are as remarkable for the excellence of their buildings as for the romantic beauty of their situation. They usually lie on small rivers or streams, and are surrounded with gardens: almost all have a defence; generally a high mud wall, flanked by tur-

[p] This is Chardin's statement, vol. vii., p. 284. Kæmpfer asserts, that Isfahan, with its suburbs, measures sixteen fersekhs, or about sixty miles: but this is evidently a great exaggeration.

[q] The environs of Shiraz have always been considered beautiful. The palace and garden of Jehân Nemâh, and of Tukht Kujureâh, as well as the gardens at the tombs of Hafiz and Sâdee, are places of public resort. The cluster of gardens at Musjid-e-Burdee extend in length about five miles, and in breadth nearly two: they abound in every variety of the finest fruits.

rets, and sometimes protected by a deep dry ditch and a rude glacis. In every town there are one or more public caravansaries for the accommodation of travellers. These edifices, which are also found at every stage on the principal roads, are in general of stone or brick: their form is square, and the interior is divided into separate apartments; the walls, which are very high, are usually defended by towers to secure them against the attack of robbers. The houses in Persia are almost all of mud, and have terraced roofs: the inner apartments are usually better than the external appearance indicates. The smaller villages are in general very rudely constructed; and the common huts, instead of a terrace, have often a dome roof, to avoid the necessity of using wood, which throughout this country is a very scarce article.

There can hardly be said to be any roads in Persia; nor are they much required, for the use of wheel carriages has not yet been introduced. Nothing can be more rugged and difficult than the passes over the mountains. The great benefits that would be derived from good roads have often been suggested to the Persians; but they have a reluctance to adopt an improvement which they believe, and not without reason, would destroy one of the natural defences of their country. The only exception is a broad road or causeway, which has been made with great labour over the Kaufelân-koh [r], a lofty and romantic mountain, between Irak and Aderbejan [s]: and this work is attributed to the

[r] The river Koozuloozun winds along the foot of the Kaufelân-koh: a bridge has been built over this fine stream; and the scene has recently acquired more interest from its being the spot where the ingenious traveller, Mr. Brown, was murdered by banditti.

[s] It is usually described as the boundary between these two provinces; but at present the district of Kalkul, which contains near a hundred and fifty villages, and is situated to the south of the mountains, is considered as belonging to Aderbejan.

Turks, who, when they possessed the latter province, desired to facilitate their further attacks upon Persia.

The more civilized and peaceable classes of the Persians, who dwell in cities, towns, and villages, have made considerable progress both in the useful and the fine arts; but their productions, and the accounts we have received from European travellers, shew that they were as far advanced several centuries ago. This is not so much owing to their internal distractions, or to their prejudices, as to the form and character of their government. Men under a rude despotism can only be happy by reconciling themselves to their actual condition: every effort at improvement is attended with danger. If a new branch of commerce is discovered, the gains of those who embark in it are likely to be over-estimated, and they become exposed to the cupidity of power. If an individual exhibits superior skill as a manufacturer, his labour is liable to be seized by the monarch, or by the provincial despot[1]: and to promulgate new principles of science, however just, subjects the teacher to the hostility of that formidable class, whose rank is grounded upon their supposed pre-eminence in knowledge, and who treat a serious attack upon their dogmas as a crime hardly less than heresy. With these obstacles to prevent improvement, there is nothing to encourage it. Amid the chances to which they are liable, few look further than to providing for their own welfare. Persia affords numerous instances of men led by religion or a desire of fame to expend great sums in charity; and many, even among the lower classes, after acquiring wealth, have wished to perpetuate their name by building caravansaries, baths, and other structures of public utility. But they neither profess nor entertain any feelings connected with the good of their country: all their views are avowedly personal; indeed, from the cha-

[1] I have known several instances of this, even under the reigning monarch, whose rule is comparatively mild and just.

racter of the government, it is impossible that they should be otherwise. A prince, from the excellence of his disposition, or of his understanding, may indulge in plans of improvement: but even his views are limited by his condition; and he desires to effect the work of half a century[a] in one or two years. His precipitation produces failure; for what depends upon a system, cannot be effected by power. All great improvements are gradual; and even when they are introduced, the society must take the shape suited to them, or they cannot be permanent.

Hence the Persians have made no essential progress in the arts of civilized life. They have appeared for ten centuries to be on the brink of great improvements, but are still stationary: their commerce is nearly the same as it was in the most ancient times. The silks of Ghilan, the wool of Carmania, and several vegetable productions[x], are still exported. The money received for these pays for the shawls of Cashmere, the indigo and printed cottons of India, the sugar of Batavia and of China, and the woollens of England.

In reading the descriptions of the agriculture of Persia by travellers at different periods, we discover little or no alteration. The means now employed to till the ground are probably those which were used in the remotest ages. The Persians have at all periods been well skilled in constructing canals and wells; an essential art in so arid a country; but their chief attention is devoted to their gar-

[a] I observed to a very ingenious Persian employed in casting cannon, that some of the guns he had just made appeared to me imperfect, and that one seemed rather crooked. He replied, it was very true, but it was not his fault: he had been commanded to do the work of ten months in ten days. "But why do not you represent the impossibility of doing so?" said I. He shook his head, and said, he knew better. "My master is an excellent and just man, but he is a Persian prince; and must be obeyed."

[x] There is a considerable export of cotton, gall nuts, and assafœtida, from Persia. The cotton and gall nuts are chiefly the produce of Irak; the assafœtida of Khorassan.

dens; and their success has been proportionate to their labours. Their vegetables and fruits [y], of which they have a great variety, are excellent. The latter, during the season, form part of the daily food for the lowest classes of the inhabitants [z].

Many of the manufactures are beautiful, particularly the gold and silver brocades, the silks, and the imitation of Cashmere shawls, made of the wool of Kerman. A variety of cotton cloths are made, but not of an equally fine texture with the Indian. There are also several manufactories of glass, and some of a coarse ware resembling china; but these wares have not yet been brought to any perfection.

In the mechanical arts the Persians are not inferior to the other nations of the East; but they do not surpass them. They work well in steel; and their swords, though brittle, are of an excellent temper and edge. They also make fire-arms, and cast cannon; and would soon rival Europeans in this manufacture, if their government, constituted as it is, could give adequate encouragement to men of science, and to the ingenuity of its subjects. In carving and gilding few nations are more skilful. They also enamel upon gold and silver in the most beautiful manner; and their ornaments, made of these metals and precious stones, often display admirable workmanship.

Chemistry, as now understood among us, is unknown in Persia; but alchymy continues to be the favourite pursuit of some of the learned. The philosopher's stone, which during centuries occupied the attention of the wisest men in Europe, still deludes those of the East. The alchymists

[y] In 1800 the finest grapes were sold in the market at Shiraz at less than a halfpenny a pound; other fruits, particularly melons, were still cheaper at Isfahan. In some parts of Persia fruit has hardly any value.

[z] It has been before stated, that extensive fields in the neighbourhood of Isfahan are appropriated to the culture of melons; and the country round it is decorated with handsome pigeon-houses, kept up at a considerable expense, to obtain what is deemed the best manure for this favourite fruit.

make their experiments with the greatest secrecy, lest others should share in the wonderful discovery which they are hourly expecting. This mystery, while it gives an importance to the pursuit in the eyes of the ignorant, affords an opportunity for impostors to practise frauds upon the credulous and wealthy [a].

[a] The mountain of Alwund near Hamadan is supposed to produce some plants that are essential for finding the philosopher's stone; hence many persons in that city waste their life in the pursuit. A few years ago one of its rich inhabitants was assured by a poor man, that he had made the glorious discovery: "But," said he, "if I, who am known to be poor, should suddenly become rich, my secret will be guessed, and I shall be seized and tortured till I reveal it. Now, if you possessed it, there could be no such danger. So I will trust you with my discovery; and if you are satisfied, after repeated experiments, that I have told the truth, you can give me a small portion of the wealth you must acquire, and I will go and end my days in devotion at the shrine of the holy Ali; for, that being under the Turkish government, I shall be safe from the danger to which my good fortune continually exposes me." The whole statement appeared so reasonable, that the hearer granted a ready belief. He was made acquainted with all the materials put into the crucibles except one, termed "the earth of Bâdeoos:" but this, his instructor assured him, was not only obtained at the mountain of Alwund, but in several other parts of Persia, and, being useful for many purposes, was to be found in most markets. He was, however, requested to send his servants to inquire into the correctness of this statement. They went, and brought back some of the earth, having purchased it at a very moderate rate. When every thing was ready, the experiment was made, and gold was produced. The merchant was rejoiced; but, to prevent deception, it was repeated, and with the same result. All doubts were removed; and he was only anxious to pay the purchase money, and get rid of his partner. The man was contented with two thousand tomâns, and proceeded to the Turkish province of Bagdad. The merchant, after he was gone, determined to begin making more gold; but the shopkeepers who had sold the earth of Bâdeoos were gone. He thought it possible, however, that, though that essential ingredient was not in Hamadan, it might be found, as his friend had told him, in other cities. His correspondents at Shiraz, at Teheran, and Isfahan, received letter after letter, desiring them to discover and purchase all the Khâk-e-Bâdeoos they could. No person had ever heard of its name. The rage of the merchant soon led to a detection of the fraud. The cunning fellow, who had duped him, had filed down thirty or forty pieces of gold into some baskets of earth, which he had dignified with a fine name, and given to some accomplices to sell. He was, however, beyond the reach of justice; and the merchant, in addition

In physic the Persians are still the pupils of Galen and Hippocrates, whom they call Jalenous and Bocrat. They are totally unacquainted with anatomy[b]; and their skill in surgery is consequently as rude as their knowledge of medicine. They class both their diseases and their remedies under four heads: hot or cold, moist or dry: each may contain one or two of these qualities; and the great principle is, that every disease must be cured by a remedy of an opposite quality. If an illness has arisen from moisture, dry remedies must be given; and hot diseases are only to be cured by cooling medicines. This classification of diseases is very arbitrary: but they are in general so bigoted to their practice, that, though disposed to place great confidence in European physicians, they are reluctant to attend to their prescriptions when opposed to their favourite system[c]. The Persian physicians are acquainted with inoculation for the small-pox; but it is little practised, though the ravages of that dreadful disease often threaten whole towns with depopulation; and notwithstanding their suffer ings from this calamity, all the efforts of the humane and skilful surgeons resident amongst them have not yet made them sensible of the great benefit of vaccination[d]. The

to his pecuniary loss, had to bear the ridicule of every one acquainted with the story.

[b] Prince Abbas Meerza sent two young Persians to England some years ago; the one was directed to study painting, the other medicine and surgery. The former unfortunately died. The latter, Hajee Baba, prosecuted his studies in England for some time, and displayed considerable intelligence and industry.

[c] Mr. Jukes, in a MS. on this subject, says, that at Isfahan in 1804, ulcerated sore throats were very common; and that he apprehended many patients died, because the physicians had decided it was a hot disease, and was to be cured by bleeding and other cooling remedies. He also mentions some cases of dysentery, where he in vain recommended mercury. It was a *hot* remedy, and could never be proper where the disease was also hot. Ice and cooling draughts were administered, and several persons died who might have been saved, if their prejudices could have been overcome.

[d] A chief of a tribe assured an officer belonging to the British mission in

principal men of the kingdom listened with rapture to the accounts they received of this great discovery, and appeared at the moment desirous that their country should benefit by it [e]: but, though a wish to promote the welfare of the people is often expressed, and sometimes felt, by Asiatic rulers, we can hardly expect that steady and persevering ardour for the good of the community, which can alone make the introduction of this great blessing effectual.

What has been said of their knowledge of physic, only applies to the more civilized, who live in cities and towns, and a great part of whom have received some education. Those who dwell in tents are seldom attended by regular professors of this art; but, as their diet is simple, and they take constant exercise, they are subject to few complaints, and for these every old man and woman [f] in the tribe has a remedy. Sometimes, like the ignorant and superstitious in

1810, that he had been told some particular pastoral tribes were exempt from the small-pox; but though positive of the fact, he could give no account of the habits of those supposed to be exempted from this disease: but as many of these tribes have a number of cattle, the assertion had perhaps some foundation in truth.

[e] Nothing can exceed the persevering humanity with which Mr. Jukes endeavoured to introduce vaccination into Persia. His efforts were unremitted for several years: they were defeated more by the apathy of the government than by the prejudices of the people.

[f] In the winter of 1800, almost every person in our mission became blind, from the glare of the snow. The recovery was certain, but tedious: so when blind myself, I listened with delight to a message from the lady of a chief, in whose house I was a guest, that she knew a certain and speedy remedy, provided I would permit her servants to apply it. I expressed my readiness to do so: a large vessel full of snow was put before me, and I was desired to place my face near it; a red hot stone was then thrown into the vessel, and the sudden dissolution of the snow caused a very great perspiration, which was increased by a cloak being pulled at the same moment over my head. This remedy, (which was administered twice,) though very disagreeable, proved efficacious, and my sight was completely restored. They have a similar remedy in North America when the eyes are affected by the snow; it is stated in the Travels of Lewis and Clarke, that, on such occasions, "they sweat the part affected, by holding the face over a hot stone, and receiving the fumes from snow thrown on it."—See the *Quarterly Review*, No. xxiii. page 330.

other countries, they trust more to their saints than their doctors. When the British mission, some years ago, was in Irak, they saw a few pieces of bread, covered with oil, which were laid upon a rock, as an offering to a saint; and were told that these pieces of bread might enable them to ascertain the number of the sick in the black tents that were pitched near; as this offering was the usual, and almost the only, effort made to get rid of any disease[g] that attacked them.

In cases of surgery the treatment is very rude: but the abstemious habits, and consequent healthy state of body of the patient, often obtain extraordinary credit to the untutored practitioner.

Though the regular physicians generally adhere strictly to the maxims of their Grecian master, as explained and enlarged upon by Aboo Ali-ben-Senna, (the Avicenna of Europeans,) and others of their most learned doctors, they boast the discovery of many new remedies. Salivation is quickly produced, by inhaling a lozenge made of cinnabar and flour, through the common pipe of the country[h]: and this speedy mode of affecting the system is universally practised, where the case is deemed to require it.

In this country, as in all others, there are many quacks in medicine, who obtain money or respect by pretending to cure every complaint[i]. Some of these boast a hereditary

[g] I was told in Kûrdistan, by the chief of a rude tribe, that his followers had only one medicine, a purgative, in which the chief ingredient was the fat of a sheep's tail. "This is boiled," he said, "and given, sometimes in small, at others in large doses. It answers very well in all complaints; and it saves us a great deal of trouble, and the expense of doctors."

[h] Mr. Jukes's MS.

[i] I find in Mr. Jukes's Journal the following remarks on the supposed practice in Persia of cold immersion for fevers:

"Dr. Currie, in the second volume of his Medical Reports, relates the case of Sir John Chardin, when treated by a Persian physician at Lár. During my residence in Persia, I had never heard of Dr. Currie's system being adopted there; upon reading the case of Chardin, therefore, I was naturally induced to make inquiries if cold water was ever applied to the

right to certain nostrums. The chiefs of a tribe among the mountains between Persia and the Pachalic of Bagdad, assert that they possess a power, descended through many generations, of curing the ague, a common complaint in that country, by beating the patient in a very unmerciful manner. Their success is said to be great. Those who are skilled in medicine must determine how far this rude treatment can have the effects ascribed to it[k].

body in fevers by the physicians of the present day in Persia. The first person to whom I applied for information, was a well-informed man, who had made medicine his particular study, and was at least acquainted with all the theories of disease, if he had not a very extensive practical knowledge. He told me, that he never had heard of the application of cold water to the body in fever, and spoke confidently of its not being the general practice of the modern physicians in Persia: tepid water to drink, and warm water, in which the leaves of the willow had been infused, to bathe the hands and feet, was more agreeable to their system of treating fevers; except in *quartan fevers*, when he informed me that cold water was sometimes dashed unexpectedly upon the patient, and cured him. In continued fevers, however, he told me, that he had never heard of it; but in very hot weather, he said, it was admissible, and even proper, to keep the patient cool; and that cold water, in which the willow leaves had been infused, might be sprinkled round where the patient lay. When I mentioned to him the case of Sir John Chardin, and the manner in which he had been so successfully treated at Lár, he seemed quite astonished, and said, 'It could only have been had recourse to by knowing that Sir John was an European from a cold climate, and that cold, therefore, was congenial with his nature: for if,' added he, 'the same person had been a native of a warm climate, the physician would, in all probability, have ordered him the *warm* bath.' I have heard, however, of one physician in Persia, who allowed his patients with continued fever to eat as much *ice* as they chose; but the use of the cold affusion seems to be quite unknown at the present day.

"According to the theory of the Persian physicians, however, it would appear to be very admissible; for it is a favourite maxim of theirs, that diseases are to be cured by remedies directly opposite in their qualities to those of the disease. Now, as in fever the sensible qualities are *heat* and *dryness*, water, which is *cold* and *moist*, ought to be its antidote. Their theories, however, as I have before remarked, are occasionally very arbitrary, and very erroneous. *Ice* and *snow*, for instance, possess very different qualities, according to their belief. They assert that ice is *cold* and *moist*, and that snow is *cold* and *dry*."

[k] I visited Kerrund twice: in 1800 and 1810. The first time, the chief

In the higher branches of science, the modern Persians know no more than their ancestors. They have a limited knowledge of mathematics, and they study astronomy chiefly for the purpose of becoming skilled in judicial astrology; a science in which the whole nation, from the monarch to the peasant, has the greatest faith. The system of Ptolemy, both as to the forms and motions of the heavenly bodies, and the shape and surface of the earth, is still believed in. Efforts have recently been made to give them better information. An abstract of the Copernican system, and of the Newtonian proofs of its truth, has been translated into Persian; and several persons have laboured to acquire more correct knowledge on this subject: but it is not probable that these rays will soon scatter the darkness in which a prejudiced and superstitious nation has for centuries been involved.

The Persians can hardly be said to know anything of geography; for, besides their erroneous notions about the form of the earth, their knowledge of its surface is limited to an imperfect acquaintance with the kingdoms in their immediate vicinity; nor do they understand enough of surveying to lay down their own country with any degree of exactness.

of that place, Hedâyet Kooli Khan, saw one of the gentlemen of the mission lying in the tent, ill of a quartan ague: he begged I would allow him to cure him; and, being asked what was his remedy, said he would beat him with sticks till he was well. The invalid declined the experiment; at which the chief was not a little offended, and brought a number of his followers to swear that they had been recovered by his blows. When I last visited this place, Hedâyet Kooli was dead. He had left ten sons; the eldest, Mahomed Ali Khan, was chief of the tribe. I asked him if he had inherited his father's knowledge of medicine. "My practice," he said, "is equally successful. I tie them up by the heels, when the cold fit is on, and bastinado them most severely, scolding them at the same time, so as to produce heat and terror, instead of a cold fit."—"And you succeed?"—"Always."—"Have you any patients but your own followers?"—"A few: those in the neighbourhood who have any sense, come to me when they are ill of the ague." "Can any of your brothers cure fevers?"—"No! no!" replied he quickly, "that is a gift or privilege confined exclusively to the head of the family."

On the introduction of Mahomedanism, the Persians received all the learning of the Arabians of the seventh century; and soon after, their writers, in every branch of literature, attained an excellence which has not been surpassed by their descendants. Their works on theology are very numerous; and it has already been shown[l] that they are well skilled in all the arts of polemics. The style of their most esteemed historians, though often hyperbolical, is generally correct, and sometimes eloquent. Like all Eastern nations, the Persians delight in tales, fables, and parables: for where liberty is unknown, and power unlimited, knowledge must be veiled[m]. The ear of a despot would be wounded by direct truths; and genius must condescend to appear in the only form in which it would be tolerated.

The Persians derive their ethics from the Greeks. Aristotle is their master; and it would be almost sacrilege to doubt his principles. One of their ablest writers in this branch is Naser-ood-deen, who has been before mentioned[n]. His celebrated treatise on morals contains a series of philosophical dissertations upon wisdom, propriety of conduct,

[l] Vol. II. page 241.

[m] The Persians boast of the great good which their most eminent moralist Sadee has produced, by his rare union of fancy, learning, urbanity, and virtue: his tales, which are appropriate to almost every conceivable event, convey the most useful lessons; and his maxims have acquired an authority almost equal to laws. His great object was to recommend good deeds to men, and justice and clemency to their rulers. In one of his admonitory odes to the former, he beautifully exclaims,

"Haif bur ân ke ruft ou kâr nâ sâkht:
"Kous-e râhillet zud ou bâr nâ sâkht."

"Alas! for him who is gone and has done no good deed:
"The trumpet of march has sounded, and his load is not bound on."

In his lessons to monarchs he has the following impressive stanza:

"Rahim koon ou be fouj der tuskheer bâsh.
"Dilhâee aullum gheer ou Shâhe Aullumgheer bâsh."

"Be merciful, and you will gain victories without an army.
"Seize the hearts of mankind, and become the conqueror of the world."

[n] Vol. I. p. 251.

happiness, virtue, and the means of averting and of remedying evil. In such treatises by Persian writers, the reader is often amused and instructed by a series of anecdotes so classified as to illustrate every virtue and vice.

The whole Persian nation is devoted to poetry. They are at that stage of civilisation when the mind dwells with the greatest fondness on the visions of the imagination; and their poets are worthy of the admiration they are so forward to grant them. In the noble epic poem of Firdousee, so often referred to in the early part of this history, the most fastidious European reader will meet with numerous passages of exquisite beauty. The narrative is generally very perspicuous; and some of the finest scenes are described with simplicity and elegance of diction. In the opinion of the Persians, his excellence lies in the description of combats and battles: but, to those who are offended by exaggeration, the tender parts of his work will be the most pleasing, as they are the freest from this defect of Eastern writers. The most extravagant flights of Firdousee, however, do not excite that disgust which we receive on reading any of his countless imitators; for so many of his personages are endowed with supernatural powers, that we are almost reconciled to hear their deeds related in a language which appears to be mere bombast, when used of beings of an inferior order.

As an epic poet, Nizâmee is deemed next in rank to Firdousee; and the subject of his principal work, the Life of Alexander the Great, has afforded him ample scope for all the vigour of his genius and the luxuriance of his imagination. Among the didactic poets Sadee certainly ranks the highest: but it is difficult to class the numerous candidates for superiority in those mystical and lyrical productions in which this nation has in all ages delighted. The Musnavee of Jellâl-ood-deen [*], the Poems of Jâmi, and the

* He is generally called the Moollah of Room; while Háfiz is usually

Odes of Hâfiz, are perhaps the most popular; but the names of Rudiki, Anveri, and several others, stand nearly on an equal rank; and some more modern writers have attained great eminence on this favourite theme. Many of these poems are remarkable for harmony of numbers and richness of fancy; but they all abound with the most extravagant passages; and the enraptured dreams of their authors can only be esteemed beauties by men who deem their poet inspired, and who regard his most unintelligible song as the gleaming of a superhuman knowledge, far beyond the comprehension of the profane and unenlightened. Many discussions have arisen as to the real and mystical meaning of these writers, and particularly of Hâfiz, whose odes are sung to excite the young to pleasure, and chanted to remind the old of the raptures of divine love. Among many classes of Soofees, the natural earthly feelings of man, and the longings of his soul after its Creator, are deemed to be inseparable; and, with a poet of this persuasion, it was easy for the subjects to be so blended, as to render it impossible to distinguish whether he is singing of earthly or of heavenly joys.

Among the innumerable volumes of Persian poetry, there is not one of any length that can be called a satire. This is owing to the condition of society not admitting of that freedom of observation and expression which can alone give excellence to this kind of writing. Firdousee, under the

known by the title of Khaujah. The Persians conceive that the former far surpasses the latter in penetration and judgment. I have heard their opinion of the two Soofee poets illustrated by the following anecdote. "A learned person was asked how it came that the author of the Musnavee and Hâfiz, two Soofees, had, in the commencement of their works, expressed themselves so oppositely on the subject of divine love; Hâfiz having said, 'The path of love appeared at first easy, but afterwards proved full of difficulties:'—while, according to Jellâl-ood-deen, 'Love at first appeared like a murderer, that he might alarm all who were without his pale.' The learned man replied, with a smile, 'That which the Moollah saw at first, was only found out at last by the Khaujah.'"

impulse of disappointment, wrote some satirical verses upon Mahmood of Ghizni; but they are only remarkable, as showing the keenness with which he felt neglect, and the bitterness of his resentment. Anveri, and several other eminent poets, have written satirical epigrams, many of which have no little point and severity. An unknown author has written a satire of some merit upon money [p], as the universal passion: but even this has no title to the name of a satire. Some of the Persian songs are very beautiful: they are chiefly on local subjects. Many of the lesser odes of the most celebrated poets may be included among their songs, as they are set to music, and sung in all assemblies.

The Persians deem music a science; but they do not appear to have made much progress in it. They have a gamut and notes, and different kinds of melody, adapted to various strains, such as the pathetic, voluptuous, joyous, and warlike: the voice is accompanied by instruments, of which they have a number; but they cannot be said to be further advanced in this science than the Indians, from whom they are supposed to have borrowed it. Their strains are often pleasing, but always monotonous, and they want that variety of expression which is among the charms of this art.

In painting the Persians seem to have advanced little within the last three centuries, for several of the figures in the palaces at Isfahan, built in the reign of Shah Abbas, appear as well executed as those of the most eminent modern artists. Their colours are very brilliant; and in portrait painting they usually succeed in taking likenesses. Some of their lesser drawings, which are highly glazed and painted

[p] In this poem almost every condition of life is described. The satirist, after detailing the professed liberal objects of the persons labouring in their different vocations, concludes every character with the following line:

"Hummâ uz pai een ast ke zer mee khauud."
"It is all from this, that the man wants money."

on wood, display equal industry and taste; but they are yet unacquainted with the rules of perspective, and the principles of just proportion.

From what has been said about the actual condition of the useful and fine arts in Persia, it appears that the people is neither in a state of improvement, nor has it fallen behind their forefathers. All that men have gained under a powerful and wise monarch, has been lost under his weak or barbarous successors. If a period of peace has invited intelligent strangers to the shores of this kingdom, they have soon been banished by the return of war. Knowledge in Persia has hitherto ebbed and flowed with the changes in its political situation, and it must continue to do so as long as the nation is under the depressing influence of an unsettled despotism.

Chapter XXIII.

THE MANNERS AND USAGES OF THE PERSIANS.

In describing the manners and usages of a nation, we must begin with those exalted ranks, whose example has always so powerful an influence on the rest of the community. The customs and ceremonies of the Persian Court have not undergone any substantial change within the last three centuries. That the reigning family are the hereditary chiefs of a warlike tribe, and still preserve many of the usages of that condition, is almost the only essential difference between their personal habits and the customs of their court, and

those of the Seffavean kings, whose manners and usages have been minutely described by European travellers [q].

After the time of Shah Abbas the Great, the princes of the blood used to be immured in the haram, where their education was intrusted to women and eunuchs; and, until the death of the king, his destined successor has not been known. The son of the lowest slave in the haram was at the beginning of this period no less eligible to succeed to the throne than the offspring of the proudest princess. In Tartary the usage has always been different. Great respect has invariably been paid there to the family of the mother. For intermarriages are one of the principal means of improving the friendship, and terminating the feuds, between the tribes; and unless the child of a high-born mother, who was a legitimate wife, had prior claims to the child of a common concubine, these relations must have proved sources of discord instead of union. The Kajirs, proud of their Tartar, or, as they term it, Turkish origin, maintain the usage of their ancestors. Mahomed Hoossein Khan, the grandfather of the present king, when he took refuge with a Turkuman chief, proudly refused to wed his daughter [r], because she was not of sufficiently high descent to give birth [s] to a race that were to contend for a throne; and the present king has declared his second son, Abbas Meerza [t], his heir, on the ground of his claims by his mother, who is a high-born female of the same tribe as the sovereign.

According to the modern practice, the princes of the

[q] Chardin and Kæmpfer have both minutely described the forms and manners of the court of Persia under the Seffavean kings.

[r] Persian MS.

[s] It is a common saying among the Tartar tribes, that "a man should choose his wife from a noble family, that his sons may emulate their maternal uncles."

[t] The mother of the king's eldest son, Mahomed Ali Meerza, was a Georgian.

blood are not immured in the haram any longer than they require female attendance and maternal care. They early learn the forms of their religion: at three or four years of age they can repeat a few short prayers, and are perfect in their genuflections and mode of holding their hands when praying. They are also most carefully instructed in all that belongs to external manner. They are taught how to make their obeisance to a superior; how to behave to a person of equal rank, or an inferior; as, also, how they are to stand in the presence of their father and king, how they are to seat themselves, if desired, and how to retire. These forms are of great consequence at a court where everything is regulated by ceremony; and it is not unusual to see a child five years old as mature in his manners, and as grave in his deportment, in a public assembly, as the oldest person present. When the young prince is between seven and eight years of age, he begins to learn Arabic and Persian. As soon as he knows the alphabet of the former language, he reads the Koran; after which he is instructed in the essential tenets of his religion. He is early imbued with the importance of those doctrines which distinguish the Sheah faith from the Soonee; and one of his first lessons is to regard the latter with abhorrence. When he is considered well grounded in religion, Persian books are put into his hands; and the works of Sadee are expected at once to give him a taste for fables and poetry, and to inspire him with a desire of virtuous fame. He is also led through a superficial course of grammar, logic, sacred law, and philosophy; but his progress in these higher branches of a Persian education depends chiefly upon his own disposition. He does not learn more than to write and read with ease and fluency, unless he is inclined to study, which is not unfrequently the case; for superior attainments as a scholar[u] always add to his reputation.

[u] The reigning king is said to be a good scholar. He is also a poet. I have a dewan, or book of odes, of which he is the reputed author.

The greatest care is taken to instruct Persian princes in all their bodily exercises. While yet children, they are trained to the use of arms; and when six or seven years of age, will ride with grace and boldness. They are often betrothed when very young, and sometimes married long before they attain the age of puberty: after which, the number of their wives and concubines depends upon their means of supporting them. When a prince is raised to the throne, his time is divided between his public duties, the pleasures of the haram, and his amusements; the portion he bestows on each of these will vary with his peculiar inclinations, his age, and his habits. However, a short sketch of the manner in which the reigning monarch passes his time, will convey a sufficient idea of the habits which are deemed suitable to his station.

His religious duties, which no King of Persia can openly neglect, require him to rise early. As he sleeps in the interior apartments, which no male is allowed to approach, his attendants are either females or eunuchs. After he is dressed with their aid, he sits for an hour or two in the hall of the haram, where his levees are conducted with the same ceremony as in his outer apartments. Female officers[x] arrange the crowd of his wives and slaves with the strictest attention to the order of precedency[y]. After hearing the reports of the persons intrusted with the internal government of the haram, and consulting with his principal wives[z],

[x] There is a number of female officers in the haram, whose titles and duties are nearly the same as those of the persons entrusted with the care of ceremonies, and the charge of maintaining order in the public court.

[y] According to the best account I was able to obtain, the fair strangers, if any have been brought, first pay their obeisance by a low bow, and are placed where their royal master can best view their charms. Afterwards the Georgian slaves and numerous mistresses are ranged before him, agreeably to their respective ranks.

[z] When the king is seated on his throne in the public hall of his haram, none but the most favoured and highest born of his legitimate wives are allowed to sit in his presence. It is said that only two of the wives of the

who are generally seated, the monarch leaves the interior apartments. The moment he comes out, he is met by officers in waiting, and proceeds to one of his private halls, where he is immediately joined by some of his principal favourites, and enters into familiar converation with them: all the young princes of the blood attend this morning levee to pay their respects. After this is over, he calls for breakfast. The preparing his meals is superintended by the Nauzir or chief steward of the household. The viands are put into dishes of fine china [a], with silver covers, and placed in a close tray, which is locked and sealed by the steward. This tray is covered with a rich shawl, and carried to the king, when the steward breaks the seal, and places the dishes before him. Some of the infant princes are generally present, and partake in this repast. The chief physician is invariably in attendance at every meal. His presence is deemed necessary, the courtiers say, that he may prescribe an instant remedy, if anything should disagree with the monarch: but this precaution, no doubt, owes its origin to that suspicion which is continually haunting the minds of such as exercise despotic power.

The manner in which the king discharges his ordinary public duties, has already been described [b]. When these are performed, he usually retires to the haram, where he sometimes indulges in a short repose. Some time before sunset he always makes his appearance in the outer apartments, and either again attends to public business, or takes a ride. His dinner is brought between eight and nine, with the same precautions and ceremonies as at breakfast. He

present king enjoy this privilege; the mother of the heir-apparent, Abbas Meerza, and the daughter of Ibrahim Khulleel Khan, formerly chief of Sheshâh.

[a] It is deemed wrong for a rigid Mahomedan to have his victuals served in dishes of silver or gold: but this rule is not always observed.

[b] See vol. II. page 308.

eats, like his subjects, seated upon a carpet, and the dishes are placed on a rich embroidered cloth spread for the occasion. Some of the former kings used to indulge openly in drinking wine; but none of the reigning family have yet outraged the religious feelings of their subjects by so flagrant a violation of the laws of Mahomed. Bowls filled with sherbet, made of every species of fruit, furnish the beverage of the royal meals; and there are few countries where more pains are bestowed to gratify the palate with the most delicious viands. After dinner, the king retires to the interior apartments, where it is said that he is often amused till a late hour by the singers and dancers of his haram. It is impossible, however, to speak of his occupations after he passes the threshold of his inner palace. He is there surrounded by a scene calculated beyond all others to debase and degrade the human character. He sees only emasculated guards, and their fair prisoners. He hears nothing but the language of submission or of complaint. Love cannot exist between beings so unequal as the monarch and his slave; and vanity must have overcome reason, before the fulsome adulation of pretended fondness can be mistaken for the spontaneous effusions of real affection. The harams are governed by the strictest discipline; and this must be necessary to preserve the peace of a community, where the arrogance of power, the pride of birth, the ties of kindred, the intrigues of art, and the pretensions of beauty, are in constant collision.

The usual routine of the king's life is often interrupted by urgent public affairs, and sometimes by amusement. The reigning family has hitherto disdained those enervating and luxurious habits which led the last Seffavean monarchs to confine themselves to their harams. They not only attend personally to public business, but are continually practising manly exercises, and engage in field sports with all the ardour of a race who cherish the habits of their

Tartar ancestors. The present king is an expert marksman and an excellent horseman: few weeks pass without his partaking in the pleasures of the chase [c].

The king has always a historiographer and a chief poet. The one writes the annals of his reign: the other, who has a high rank at court, composes odes in his praise, and, with grateful ardour, celebrates the munificence of his patron. A giant and a dwarf were at one period of the present reign part of the royal establishment; and it is never without a jester, who enjoys an extraordinary latitude of speech, and, both in his dress and manner, assumes the habit and appearance of folly. It is usual to laugh at the witticisms of these jesters, even when they are the most severe; and the sovereign himself respects their privilege. The tribe to which Kerreem Khan belonged, speak a language which, from its rudeness, is denominated "the barbarous dialect [d]." As this prince was one day sitting in public, he commanded his jester to go and bring him word what a dog, that was barking very loud, wanted. The courtiers smiled at this sally of their monarch. The jester went, and, after appearing to listen for some time with profound attention, re-

[c] The favourite game is the deer, of which there are several kinds. That which is usually hunted is the antelope, which may be termed the fleetest of quadrupeds. A common mode of hunting them is with hawks and dogs, which are trained to aid each other. Two hawks are flown when the deer is at a great distance: they soon reach it, and strike one after the other at its head. This annoys and interrupts the rapid flight of the animal so effectually, that the dogs come up and seize it. It is also usual to surround the antelope with a number of horsemen, each holding a dog in a slip. When the antelope tries to escape, the aim is to intercept it; and though no dog, however swift, can reach it at the commencement of the chase, it is turned out by fresh ones being continually slipped. In this mode of hunting, the object is to bring the game near the king, who usually holds a favourite dog in a slip. Hawking is a favourite amusement. Bustards, hares, herons, and partridges, are the usual game. In this sport the king generally carries a hawk on his hand. Shooting game is also very common. The Persian soldiers are excellent marksmen; and this is an accomplishment which it is a disgrace not to possess.

[d] *Kuj zubán*, literally "the crooked tongue."

turned, and said with a grave air, "Your majesty must send one of the chief officers of your own family to report what that gentleman says: he speaks no language except 'the barbarous dialect,' with which they are familiar, but of which I do not understand one word." The good-humoured monarch laughed heartily at this jest, and gave the wit a present. This anecdote, to which many similar might be added, shows that there is little difference between the office of jester at the modern court of Persia, and that which some centuries ago existed at every court in Europe. A resemblance even in trifling forms merits attention, as it may lead to conclusions on the progress of knowledge and the condition of society: and from the character of their amusements we may perhaps judge as correctly, as from their more serious occupations, of the degree of civilization which a people has attained.

In the court there is always a person who bears the name of "story-teller to his majesty;" and the duties of his office require a man of no mean acquirements. Though passionately fond of public exhibitions, the Persians have none that deserve the name of theatrical entertainments: but, though strangers to the regular drama, their stories are often dramatic; and those whose occupation is to tell them, sometimes display so extraordinary a skill [e], and such varied powers, that we can hardly believe, while we look on their altered countenances and listen to their changed tones, that it is the same person, who at one moment tells a plain nar-

[e] Derveish Seffer of Shiraz is one of the best narrators of stories and reciters of verses, that I knew in Persia. In 1800, when he was one day commencing a tale, two gentlemen rose to go away. Seeing him look disappointed, I observed, that the cause of their departure was their inability to enjoy his story, from being unacquainted with the language. "I beg they will stay," he exclaimed, "and you shall see my power reach them in spite of their want of knowledge of Persian." They remained; and the changes of his countenance and tones had the effect he expected. They were delighted with the humourous part of his story, and moved with the pathetic.

rative in his natural voice, then speaks in the hoarse and angry tone of offended authority, and next subdues the passions he has excited by the softest sounds of feminine tenderness. The art of relating stories is attended both with profit and reputation. Great numbers attempt it, but few succeed. It requires considerable talents, and great study. None can arrive at eminence except men of cultivated taste and retentive memory. They must not only be acquainted with the best ancient and modern stories, but be able to vary them by introducing new incidents, which they have heard or invented. They must also recollect the finest passages of the most popular poets, to aid the impression of the narrative by appropriate quotations. The person whose office it is to amuse his majesty with these stories, is always in attendance. It is equally his duty to beguile the fatigue of a long march [f], and to soothe the mind when disturbed by the toils of public affairs; and his tales are artfully made to suit the disposition and momentary humour of the monarch. Sometimes he recites a story of the genii; at others he speaks of the warlike deeds of former sovereigns, or of the love of some wandering prince. Often the story is of coarser materials, and the king is entertained with low and obscene adventures.

In no court is more rigid attention paid to ceremony. Looks, words, the motions of the body, are all regulated by the strictest forms. When the king is seated in public, his sons, ministers, and courtiers, stand erect, with their hands crossed, and in the exact place belonging to their rank. They watch his looks, and a glance is a command. If he speaks to them, you hear a voice reply, and see the lips move, but not a motion or gesture betrays that there is ani-

[f] In 1810, I had the good fortune to be accompanied during part of my journey by Moollah Adenâh, the king's story-teller. He proved a most agreeable companion; the fatigue of the longest marches was forgotten in listening to his tales.

[illegible]tion in any other part of the frame[g]. The monarch [illegible] speaks in the third person: "The king is pleased," "the king commands." His ministers usually style him "the object of the world's regard." They are as particu[illegible] in forms of speech as in other ceremonies; and superi[illegible]ity and inferiority of rank, in all their gradations, are [illegible]plied [illegible] terms used in the commonest conversations. Noth[illegible] exceed the splendour of the Persian court on [illegible]inary occasions. It presents a scene of the gre[illegible]agnificence, regulated by the exactest order. To [illegible] of the government is so much attention paid as to [illegible]ct maintenance of those forms and ceremonies, which [illegible]emed essential to the power and glory of the monarch; [illegible] the high officers[h] to whom this duty is allotted, are [illegible]ed with the fullest authority, and are always attended [illegible] a number of inferiors, who carry their commands into [illegible]e most prompt execution.

The arrival of a foreign embassy is deemed one of the occasions when the king ought to appear in all his grandeur. The ceremonies of their reception appear to have been substantially the same in all ages; and the present monarch has endeavoured to vie with the most magnificent of his predecessors in this respect. The foreign minister advances with his suite and escort to one of the interior gates of the palace. The moment that he reaches the precincts of the royal abode, all is complete silence: even the horses, as if trained to the scene, hardly move their heads. When he dismounts, he is conducted into a small apartment, where he is met by one of the principal officers of government. After being seated there for some minutes, the king is announced to be upon the throne, and the ambassador pro-

[g] If the king would speak to a person at a distance, he commands him to advance; but this command must be repeated several times, for the person stops at every three or four steps, as if fearful of coming too near.

[h] Their names and duties are little altered since the period of Chardin and Kæmpfer, who have both given minute accounts of them.

ceeds to the hall of audience. That splendid room, the floor of which is raised about eight feet from the ground, is situated in a garden, intersected by regular alleys and fountains: from the throne to the entrance of the gardens, the princes, ministers, nobles, courtiers, and royal guards, are ranged in their respective ranks; but the splendour of these officers, who are robed in their richest habits, is eclipsed in a moment, when the eye glances at the sovereign, whose throne and dress are covered with the most precious jewels. As the ambassador advances between two officers, whose gold-enamelled wands are the badges of their high stations, he is twice required to make an obeisance[i]. When near the throne, the lord of requests[k] pronounces his name, and that of the sovereign by whom he is sent. The king says, in reply, "You are welcome;" and the foreign minister proceeds to take his seat in the same room, but at some distance from the king. After the ceremony of delivering the letter or credentials is past, the monarch repeats that he is welcome, and generally enters into a conversation calculated to make his visitor feel perfectly at his ease[l], and to substitute more pleasing impressions for those which the imposing pomp of the scene had inspired. If the am-

[i] The Persian officers made a very low bow at two appointed places, before they came to the hall in which the king was seated. I took off my hat at each of these places, and made a bow to his majesty when I entered the hall.

[k] The Yeshkâgâssee-bâshee.

[l] I have exactly described the ceremonies which occurred on my first visit to Persia in 1800. After I had been seated a short time, the king with a smile said, "We will talk of business hereafter; you must now satisfy me, Captain Malcolm, about the correctness of a report which I have heard, but cannot believe. Is it true that the king of England has only one wife?" I told him it was true, and that no Christian prince could have more. "But he has mistresses, then?" he said. I replied, that the king of England was remarkable for his attention to virtue and morality, and had none. He laughed heartily, and said he should not like to be a king where such usages prevailed. This sally was intended to place me at my ease, and to do away the formality of a visit of introduction.

bassador has any presents to offer, they are received without any show of gratification; the most extraordinary works of art must not appear to excite surprise, or to fix the attention of the monarch, when they are publicly presented. The forms of his condition require that he should display a seeming indifference to all such objects, and should suppress his pleasure or wonder, till he can indulge it without witnesses.

As there are no wheel carriages[m] in Persia, the king always rides[n], unless prevented by indisposition; when, if forced to move, he is carried in a litter[o] suspended between two mules. His tents and portable pavilions are very magnificent. They are surrounded with a high tent-wall, which encloses both the outer and inner apartments. The same forms and usages are observed when he is in the field as at the capital; but on active service his female train is necessarily greatly reduced. Nâdir Shah prohibited the chiefs of his army from encumbering its march with their numerous females[p]; and he himself gave an example of moderation which has been more praised than imitated.

The dress of the Seffavean kings was as splendid as that of the present; but the costume is much changed. It is now the fashion in Persia to wear the beard long, and the head is covered with a cap instead of a turban. The upper part of the garments is made to fit the body very close, but the lower is invariably loose[q].

[m] I made the king a present of a handsome curricle, with which he was at the moment much delighted.

[n] The king has two or three elephants; and for some years past has appeared seated upon one of them, when attending the annual races at the festival of Nou Rôze.

[o] It is in a litter of this kind, called Tekht-e-Revân, and upon large panniers, called Kujâwul, carried by camels, that the ladies who attend the king when he takes the field are conveyed.

[p] According to a MS in my possession, he limited his chief officers to one wife when in the field, and was himself content with two.

[q] The Persians are much disgusted with the European usage of uncovering the head, and of wearing the lower garments tight.

To no part of the royal establishment is more attention paid than to the horses. They are placed under the charge of an officer of rank, styled Meer-a-Khoor, or "the lord of the stable." The finest colts from every part of the kingdom are sent to the king; and from these he selects what are deemed the best, for his own riding. The charger on which he is mounted is richly caparisoned; and a number of others, with gold-embossed saddles and bits, are led before him [r], and, when he is travelling, form the most magnificent part of his state. The king's stable is deemed one of the most sacred of sanctuaries: this usage continues in force; during the present reign, a nobleman [s] of the first rank, who had aspired to the throne, took refuge in the royal stable, and remained there till he obtained his pardon. The military tribes have always regarded this sanctuary with the most superstitious reverence. "A horse," they say, "will never bear him to victory by whom it is violated [t]."

The kings of Persia have always been very observant of the forms of religion. They say their prayers at the appointed hours: as it is the habit of Mahomedans to do this in public, the neglect of it would excite notice; and nothing would tend more to weaken their authority than a belief that they were irreligious. They sometimes attend divine worship in the principal mosque of the capital; and, like their subjects, pay their devotions, whenever they have an

[r] Every officer of rank in Persia has one or more led horses.

[s] The late Sulimân Khan Kajir, who was first cousin to the reigning king.

[t] In one Persian MS. all the misfortunes of Nâdir Meerza, the grandson of Nâdir Shah, are attributed to his having violated the stable by putting to death a person who had taken refuge there. The same writer remarks, "The monarch or chief in whose stable a criminal takes refuge must feed him as long as he stays there; he may be slain the moment before he reaches it, or when he leaves it; but when there, a slave who has murdered his master cannot be touched. The place of safety is at the horse's head; and if that is tied up in the open air, the person who takes refuge is to touch the head-stall."

opportunity, at the sepulchres of those sainted persons who are buried within their dominions. As Sheahs, they profess great veneration for the memory of Ali and his sons; but not being able to visit their tombs, which are within the Turkish territories, they content themselves with sending rich presents to those shrines. It is also an object of ambition to be buried at those sacred places. The body of Aga Mahomed Khan, the late king, was sent to Kerbelah, that it might be interred near the dome which canopies the remains of the sainted Imâms, Hoossein and Hussun.

It has been before stated that the Eed-e-Nou Rôze, or "the feast of the vernal equinox," is to this day observed with as much joy and festivity as by the ancient Persians. This single institution of former days has triumphed over the intolerant bigotry which destroyed the religion it was grounded on; and the Mahomedans of Persia have chosen rather to be upbraided with the impious observance of what their enemies term a usage of infidels[u], than to abolish a feast so cherished by their ancestors. They have however discovered another reason for celebrating this day; it is the anniversary of the elevation of Ali to the caliphate. There are many fabulous accounts of the origin of the feast of Nou Rôze. The Guebres, or worshippers of fire, who were the former inhabitants of Persia, computed by the solar and not by the lunar year: theirs was divided into twelve months; and every day of the month, as well as the month itself, was named after one of their angels. The ancient kings used to dress in a particular robe every day. Scarlet, richly embroidered, or rather woven with gold, was the dress for the day Hormuzd[x], the Nou Rôze, or vernal equinox. Many reasons are stated, to show why this day is kept as a festival. God, one author[y] says, began the creation upon it, and ordered the planets to move in their various orbits.

[u] The Turks continually upbraid the Persians with their observing a feast instituted by the worshippers of fire.

[x] Persian MS.

[y] Persian MS.

Another affirms, that Jemsheed[a] built the palace of Persepolis, and entered it on this day, which he ordered in future to be kept as a joyous feast. Many other equally fabulous accounts are given of the origin of this festival; but the fact is, it is the opening of the spring, the day on which winter is over, and the season of gladness commences. It is the custom for the king to march out of his capital on the Nou Rôze, attended by his ministers, nobles, and as many of his army as can be assembled. The ceremonies of the day commence with a review; and then the tribute and presents of all the rulers and governors of the different provinces are laid at the foot of the throne, which is placed in a magnificent tent pitched for the purpose in an open plain. The king remains in camp several days, which are passed in joy and festivity. Horse-races[a] are among the amusements; and the monarch, whose favourite horses generally win, gives presents to the fortunate riders: he also confers dresses of honour on all the chief nobles and officers of his government; who give similar marks of their regard to their servants and dependants. This feast is kept with equal demonstrations of joy in every part of the kingdom. It continues nearly a week[b]; but the first day is the most important.

[a] According to another account, equally fabulous, Jemsheed, whose name was originally *Jum*, one day pitched his jewel-ornamented throne on an eminence, in the province of Aderbejan; and, after placing the crown upon his head, sat down with his face towards the rising sun, the reflection of which, from the jewels of his crown, shed a lustre that dazzled all around, and they exclaimed *sheed, lustre*. This title was added to his name; and the day was kept as a feast.

[a] Horse-racing has always been deemed worthy of the patronage of the Kings of Persia; and there are annual races, not only at the capital, but in all the principal cities. The distance is according to the age of the horses; but it is seldom less than seven miles, or more than twenty-one. The object is not so much to try the speed as the strength of the horses, and to discover those which can be depended on for long and rapid marches. They are always ridden by boys between twelve and fourteen. Mares never run, nor are they used in Persia for military purposes, except by the Arab tribes, who, like their brethren in Arabia, give them a preference.

[b] The exact time of its continuance does not appear fixed. The rejoicings sometimes last six days, at others only three; and those who have

On this all ranks appear in their newest apparel; they send presents of sweatmeats [c] to each other; and every man kisses his friend on the auspicious morning of the Nou Rôze.

The Persian kings have always attached great importance to the privilege of having a band of musicians, and of displaying particular banners at their festivals, and when encamped with their army. One of the standards of the ancient monarchs was the apron of Kâwâ, the blacksmith, who rebelled against Zohâk, and placed Feridoon upon the throne [d]. Since the introduction of Mahomedanism a variety of colours or flags has been adopted, which have in general been ornamented with symbols allusive to the deeds of the prophet or his descendants. The commonest has been a representation of the Zulfekâr, or two-edged sword of Ali; but, notwithstanding the attachment of the Persians to this sacred banner, their sovereigns have for many centuries preserved, as the peculiar arms [e] of the country, the

neither money nor time to waste, are content with observing the first day, that of the vernal equinox.

[c] There is perhaps no country where the inhabitants live so much upon sweetmeats as in Persia. The finest is the guzangabeen, made of the honey of the guz, or tamarisk tree, mixed with some flour and sugar. This honey is produced by an insect or small worm, which resembles a white thread. It lies on the leaf of the tree, and appears inert. During forty days in summer the insects are brushed off the leaves every three days, and they always collect again in astonishing numbers. The guzangabeen is chiefly found in Irak. I received the above description of it from an English gentleman, who saw the insect on the tree when travelling through that province.

[d] Vol. I. page 13.

[e] The causes which led to the sign of Sol in Leo becoming the arms of Persia cannot be distinctly traced; but there is reason to believe that the use of this symbol is not of very great antiquity. We meet with it upon the coins of one of the Seljookian princes of Iconium; and when this family had been destroyed by Hulakoo, the grandson of Chenghiz, that prince, or his successors, perhaps adopted this emblem as a trophy of their conquest; whence it has remained ever since among the most remarkable of the royal insignia. A learned friend, who has a valuable collection of oriental coins, and whose information and opinion have enabled me to make this conjecture, believes that the emblematical representation of Sol in Leo was first adopted by Gheat-ood-deen Kai Khoosroo-ben-Kaikobad, who began to reign A. H. 634, A. D. 1236, and died A. H. 642, A. D. 1244; and this

sign or figure of Sol in the constellation of Leo: and this device, a lion couchant and the sun rising at his back, has not only been sculptured upon their palaces [f] and embroidered upon their banners [g], but has been converted into an Order [h], which, in the form of gold and silver medals, has been given to such as have distinguished themselves against the enemies of their country [i].

The nature of absolute power requires that it should be supported by a continual revival of the impression of its high and almost sacred character. Many of the usages of Persia are calculated to produce this effect: every thing connected with the royal name or authority is treated with a respect increased by the form which attends it. If the king sends an honorary dress, the person for whom it is intended must proceed several miles to meet it, and clothe himself in his robes of favour, with every mark of gratitude and submission [k]. If a firmaun, or mandate, is written by

emblem, he adds, is supposed to have reference either to his own horoscope, or to that of his queen, who was a princess of Georgia.

[f] Hanway states, Vol. I. p. 199, that over the gate which forms the entrance of the palace built by Shah Abbas the Great, at Ashräff, in Mazenderan, are "the arms of Persia, being a lion, and sun rising behind it."

[g] The emblem of the Lion and Sun is upon all the banners given to the regular corps of infantry lately formed. They are presented to the regiments with great ceremony. A moollah, or priest, attends, and implores the divine blessing on them.

[h] This order, with additional decorations, has been lately conferred upon several ministers and representatives of European governments in alliance with Persia.

[i] The medals which have been struck with this symbol upon them, have been chiefly given to the Persian officers and men of the regular corps who have distinguished themselves in the war with the Russians. An English officer who served with these troops informs me, that those on whom these medals have been conferred are very proud of the distinction, and that all are extremely anxious to obtain them.

[k] The princes of the royal family are not exempted from paying this mark of respect. There is in general a place in the vicinity of the provincial capitals called Khelât-posh, which means "putting on the honorary dress;" to which the governor, or other officer, who receives it, must proceed to be invested with it. The Khelât-posh, near Shiraz, is four miles from it on the Isfahan road.

the monarch to one of the officers of government, this also is met at a distance by the person it is addressed to; who, after raising it to his head, gives it to his secretary to read, and all stand in respectful silence till the perusal is finished. If a minister has occasion to mention the king, it is not unusual, after inserting all his titles, to leave a blank, and to write the royal name at the top of the letter, lest it should be degraded by having even a word above it. A short time ago a picture of the reigning monarch was sent to the ruler of Scind. It was enclosed in a case, and nailed down on a litter carried by two mules: but, though invisible, it was deemed entitled to the respectful homage of his subjects in the countries it passed through. On its approach to Abusheher, the governor, with all his troops and attendants, went a stage to pay his obeisance[l]. When it came near, they dismounted from their horses, and walked forward to meet it on foot: the governor kissed the conveyance, in token of his devotion to that which it contained, and accompanied it to Abusheher, where it was welcomed with salutes; and the inhabitants were commanded to show every demonstration of joy[m] upon this happy occasion. There can be no doubt that this whole ceremony was conducted in exact conformity to orders from the court; for so great is the attention to minute forms in all points connected with the king or his family, that it is usual, when an officer is sent on any public service, for some person in authority to direct, by letter[n],

[l] This occurred in January, 1810. Major C. Pasley, who was then residing at Abusheher, in a high public station, was requested to aid at this ceremony, but declined the invitation.

[m] The trowsers and shifts of the females were exhibited on almost every house at Abusheher, as a sign of their joy. This extraordinary custom prevails among all the Arab tribes settled in Persia.

[n] The following is a translation of a letter from the vizier, Mahomed Nubbee Khan, at Shiraz, to his brother, Jaffier Khan, Governor of Abusheher, conveying instructions for his reception and treatment of the nobleman who was appointed mehmander, or "entertainer," to the mission under my charge:— "My

the exact ceremonies and attentions with which he is to be received and treated.

The mode of introducing a foreign minister at Court has been described. The forms observed in his intercourse with the viceroys of provinces and governors of cities, before he reaches the capital, are deemed equally important. The manner of meeting him before he enters a town, and of his reception at the houses he visits, are subjects of the most minute arrangement. The rank and number of the persons sent to welcome him, the distance they go, and the time at which they dismount, mark the degree of respect and consideration he is held in: and at his first interviews with princes of the blood or nobles of high rank, the inclination of the head, the rising from the seat, the advancing to the edge of the carpet, to the door, or even beyond it, and the place where he is to be seated, are always settled by previous agreement. Ceremonies of this kind have every where some importance; but they are most attended to by a people who, like the Persians, have no correct knowledge of the character and condition of distant nations, and whose impressions are chiefly formed from the appearance and conduct of their representatives. If an ambassador assumes great state, his nation is considered to be wealthy and powerful: if he exacts attention, and resents neglect, his monarch is believed to be

"My dear brother!—Hoossein Khan Kajir, who is appointed mehmander to General Malcolm, is a nobleman of the first rank and family: he will keep you informed of his progress. When he arrives at Dalkhee, fifty miles from Bushire, he will send on this letter; and write to you on the subject of his waiting upon the General. The day he comes to camp you will proceed to meet him, attended by all the garrison of Bushire, as far as the date trees on the borders of the Desert: you will accompany him to General Malcolm's tent; and when he leaves it, you will proceed with him to his own tent, which must be pitched, as the General desires, on the right or left of his encampment. If Hoossein Khan Kajir arrive in the morning, you will stay and breakfast with him; if in the evening, you will dine with him. Your future attentions to him will be regulated by your politeness and good sense; and you will always consider him as a noble guest, who should be entertained in a manner suitable to his rank, and to the distinguished situation of mehmander to General Malcolm."

lofty and independent, and worthy of that friendship which he disdains to court by any sacrifice of dignity or honour; while a contrary proceeding is certain to lead to opposite conclusions. It is not unusual to hear a Persian nobleman or minister pass a eulogium on the extraordinary knowledge, firmness, and spirit, of an ambassador of his own country, or of a foreign state; and when you expect to be told of some remarkable negotiation or treaty that he conducted, you are informed that his great knowledge was displayed in not being overreached in some point of form, and that his firmness withstood every effort to make him contented with one shade of attention less than his due. The conduct of individuals on these occasions is deemed connected, not only with their own fame, but that of their country; and the best Persian historians have recorded, with honour, the names of the ambassadors who have been most alive to what their station demanded on these essential points of etiquette. We may complain of all this, and deem it at variance with sound reason, which considers the substance more than the form, and is better pleased with manly simplicity than vain pomp and display; but it would be as rational to expect that the Persians should understand the beauties of our language on first hearing it, as that they should appreciate, at the first stages of our intercourse with them, the superior value of our customs. Besides, in a community where every thing is personal [o], high rank, to support itself, must always assume an imposing attitude. The natives of the east term the magnificence which surrounds their kings and chief rulers "the clothing of the state [p]."—"You may speak to the ears of others," was the reply of a very sensible Persian to a European gentleman, who asked him some question on this

[o] When I have spoken to sensible Persians on the difference between their government and institutions and those of England, I have always received the same answer: *Kár-e-shoomá bá hikmut ust; kár-e-má bá zát;* i. e. "With you, every thing is by science, or systematic; with us, every thing is personal."

[p] Lebás-e-dowlut.

subject; "but if you desire to be understood by my countrymen, you must address their eyes."

The princes, nobles, ministers, and high public officers imitate the king in many of their usages. All the respect they pay to him, they exact from their inferiors: each in his rank has a petty court, with forms regulated in nearly the same manner, and by officers bearing the same names, as those who attend the monarch. Every chief, or officer of elevated station, has his haram, his secretaries, his officers of ceremonies, his master of horse, and sometimes his poet and jester; and in his house there is as strict an attention to punctilio as in the palace of the sovereign. Sensible of their precarious condition, these persons appear alike desirous of obtaining money and of spending it. They seem eager to crowd into their hour of good fortune all the enjoyments they can. They lavish their wealth in much the same manner as those of the same rank do in other countries: women, horses, rich arms, and dress, are the principal objects of their desire. Their splendid apartments are ornamented with rich carpets, and are generally so situated as to be perfumed by flower gardens, and refreshed by fountains. One of their pleasures is to sit in these enjoying their coffee and tobacco, and feasting their friends. The ministers breakfast and dine almost every day in a large party. Their meals are always abundant, and sometimes sumptuous; and they often invite persons of the lowest condition to partake of them[q].

The higher ranks are in general educated in the same manner as the princes of the blood; and they are carefully

[q] I have dined with the Prime Minister when nobles of the highest rank, inferior meerzas, or clerks, merchants, mendicant poets, and astrologers, have been of the party. When Captain Stewart, Secretary to the British Mission in 1810, was sitting with the present minister, Hajee Mahomed Hoossein Khan, in his tent, a poor old countryman brought three combs for sale. The Hajee examined them, and was settling the price as breakfast was served up: he left off making the bargain; but, with that condescending affability for which he is celebrated, desired the peasant to sit down and take his breakfast, which he did at the same *fursh* (or cloth on which the dishes are placed) with the minister.

instructed in all that belongs to exterior manner and deportment. Nothing can exceed their politeness; and in their social hours, when formality is banished, their conversation is delightful. It is enlivened by anecdotes; and their stories and observations are improved by quotations of beautiful passages from their best poets, with whose works almost every Persian of intelligence is acquainted.

The chiefs of the military tribes may be termed the hereditary nobility. The monarch, by his influence or direct power, may alter the succession, and place an uncle in the situation of a nephew, and sometimes a younger brother in that of an elder; but the leader of the tribe must be of the family of their chiefs. The title of khan is conferred on such persons as a matter of course. A son born to a noble of high rank is often honoured with this title when his birth is announced at court. The younger sons or nephews of a chief seldom receive it till they are enrolled in the king's guards, or have performed some service. This class are most tenacious of their descent; and the succession is regulated by the rank and birth of the mother. The son of a military khan by a concubine is never placed on a footing with his legitimate offspring: if parental fondness attempted to do so, it would be resented by the relations of his legitimate wives, and would outrage the feelings of his tribe[r]. The manners of this class, even when softened by long residence at court, always retain a good deal of haughtiness. They are (with some remarkable exceptions) not so polished and well educated as the civil officers; and much of their time is devoted to martial exercises and field sports.

[r] In 1810, when I visited Mehrab Khan, the chief of a small branch of the Affshâr, at his family residence, two of his sons, very richly dressed, were introduced: the eldest was between eight and nine. When we were seated, a fine boy, between twelve and thirteen, in plain clothes, seated himself at a distance, below the other boys. I asked the khan who he was?—"He is my son," said he, "and he is a fine lad; but his mother was only a jeweller's daughter, to whom I was not regularly married. The other boys are descended from a high-born mother, and consequently are my heirs."

The ministers of state and the secretaries of the various departments of government generally bear the name of meerza. This term, which is a compound of two words, signifies the son of an ameer, or lord; but at present, when prefixed to a name[s], it does not denote high birth. It may be translated *civilian*, as the habits it implies are altogether of a civil nature: all who assume it are understood to have been well brought up, and devote themselves to those duties which require education[t]. They should be able to read and write well, to keep accounts, and be thoroughly versed in all the rules and forms of epistolary correspondence, which are considered by men of rank no less essential than the ceremonies with regard to their personal intercourse. Meerzas are in general citizens, though sometimes they belong to warlike tribes. The fact is, every person who has received the slightest education, and who, for any reason, prefers civil occupations to military, becomes a meerza, and is a candidate for the employments usually given to persons of this description. These employments are very numerous: every officer in the army, every magistrate of a village, has his meerza. This class may be said to fill the highest and the lowest offices in the government: they are usually distinguished by wearing a kullumdân (or small case containing pens and ink) in their girdle; and, however wealthy, they seldom dress with splendour, or assume the state and equipage of the chiefs of tribes. Their manners, from their occupation, are mild and polite; and some of them are highly polished and accomplished. Generally speaking, they are careful not to offend the arrogance of the rustic tribes, by adopting their habits. They rarely follow the sports of

[s] *Meerza* is derived from *meer*, or *ameer*, "lord," and *za*, a form of *zada*, "son." When it follows the name, instead of being prefixed, *meerza* always denotes a prince of the blood royal.

[t] A meerza may be called a man of business. Some of this class are men of learning, which is certainly not required to qualify them for their occupations. Learning and science, which always imply a knowledge of Arabic, are deemed more necessary and appropriate accomplishments for the moollahs, or higher classes of priesthood.

the field, or practise martial exercises; and they hardly ever pretend to military skill: but their modesty does not prevent their being treated with slight, if not contempt, by haughty nobles, their relation to whom is not unlike that in which the clerks stood to the knights and barons under the feudal system. The monarch often raises them to the dignity of khan: but they are looked upon as a mere court nobility; and the lowest chieftain of a clan considers himself superior in real rank to the most favoured meerza.

The priesthood have few distinct usages. Their occupation enjoins plainness of dress, and forbids the vanity and display to which their countrymen are so much attached. They are almost all Syuds, which marks their claim to a descent from the prophet. The lower ranks are seldom so respectable as the higher; and the order is degraded by a crowd of persons, who are, or pretend to be, Syuds, assume the name of Hajee, (which denotes "a pilgrim to Mecca,") and that of Moollah, or "learned man;" and beg, or rather demand alms, on the strength of their holy character. These persons, who are remarkable for their low cunning and impudence, may be said to live upon the charity of the rest of the community, by whom they are feared and despised. In every tale of roguery we meet with a Moollah, Syud, or Hajee. One Persian writer relates, that a man purchased a fine bunch of grapes of a person who was sitting behind a small window. After he had paid his money, he took hold of the ends of the bunch, but, in pulling it through the lattice, every grape fell on the inside, and he had nothing but the bare stalk. "Oh Syud! O Moollah! O Hajee!" he exclaimed. The man within opened the door, and said, "You know me then, friend?"—"I never saw you before," said the person; "but I was convinced no one who had not a right to all these sacred titles could ever have played me such a trick." Like anecdotes are repeated in every company; and this proves, that though many of the priesthood are respected for their personal merit, they do not, as a body, enjoy the same consideration as in some other Mahomedan

nations. But the respect which is denied to the order collectively, is granted to individuals. The estimation in which the principal Mooshtâheds, or high priests, are held has been before noticed. The most powerful, as well as the weakest Persian monarchs have sought to conciliate them. We read, in the History of Abbas the Great, of a person complaining to Moollah Ahmed, the Mooshtâhed of Ardebil, that the king had taken his sister by force into his haram. The holy man gave him the following note: "Brother Abbas, restore the bearer's sister." The king commanded her to be instantly given up; and, showing the note to his courtiers, said, "Let this be put into my shroud: for, on the day of judgment, having been called brother by Moollah Ahmed will avail me more than all the actions of my life." The most cruel among the successors of Abbas were only merciful at the solicitation of their chief priests. Aga Mahomed Khan allowed them to approach him when no others dared; and they sometimes pleaded with success for those whom he had doomed to destruction. The reigning monarch has shown them even greater attention; and as long as they abstain from meddling in political affairs, and disregard worldly honours and wealth [u], they will in all probability preserve the influence they have established.

There are a number of persons who pursue their studies till they are entitled to the name of Moollah, and to all the honours of a Persian college, without classing themselves

[u] Their avoiding intercourse with persons high in station, and being slow to cultivate the acquaintance of foreigners, does not always arise from the bigotry it is usually imputed to. Understanding that Shaikh-ool-Islâm, the chief judge of the court of Sherrâh, at Shiraz, had weak sight, and wished for a pair of spectacles, I made him a present of a pair handsomely mounted; but they were returned, with a request for one of less value. Some time afterwards I met him, and he said to me, "You must have been surprised at my giving you so much trouble about a trifle; and, I fear, you thought I showed an unnecessary affectation of humility about the spectacles; but, in my situation, every trifle is of importance; and I must not give the slightest grounds for a suspicion of my being actuated by the cupidity so common among my countrymen. It is this that has prevented my cultivating your acquaintance so much as I desired."

with the priesthood. These follow various occupations. Some devote themselves to study; and to the most eminent of those who follow literary pursuits a very high rank in society is assigned. An author, who has acquired fame as a historian, an astronomer, or a poet, is respected by all, and has a place of distinction in every company in which he mixes. Every prince and noble desires to be considered a patron of genius; and this feeling secures to men of learning a very fair share in the enjoyments of their fellow countrymen. They are not only esteemed as authors, but as agreeable companions. Their reading furnishes them with anecdotes, which amuse and instruct; and some of them are alike remarkable for the excellence of their writings, and the sprightliness of their conversation. Even the common pretenders in this class, who are very numerous, are in general men of good manners and ready wit.

A very slight knowledge of astronomy is sufficient to allow a student to profess the occult science of judicial astrology. If he can take an altitude with an astrolâbe, knows the names of the planets, and their different mansions, with a few technical phrases, and understands the astrological almanacks which are annually published, he deems himself entitled to offer his services to all who wish to consult him; that is, to every person in Persia who has the means of rewarding his skill. Nothing is done by a man of any consequence or property, without reference to the stars. If any measure is to be adopted, if a voyage or journey is to be commenced, if a new dress[x] is to be put on, the lucky or unlucky moment must be discovered, and the almanack and astrologer are consulted. A person wishing to set out on a journey will not allow a lucky day to escape, even though he is not ready to start. He leaves his own house at the propitious mo-

[x] I was surprised to see the prime minister, Hajee Ibrahim, consulting a Persian about the fortunate moment for putting on a new dress. Seeing me smile, he said, "Do not think, Captain Malcolm, I am such a fool as to put faith in all this nonsense; but I must not make my family unhappy by refusing to comply with forms which some of them deem of consequence."

ment, and remains, till he can proceed, in some incommodious lodging; satisfied that, by quitting his home, he has secured all the benefit which the influence of good stars can afford him.

In 1806[y], when a Persian ambassador was about to proceed to India, he was informed by his astrologer of a most fortunate conjunction of the stars, which, if missed, was not likely to occur again for some months. He determined, that though he could not embark, as the ship was not ready, to move from his house at Abusheher, to his tents, which were pitched at a village five miles off. It was discovered, however, by the astronomer, that he could neither pass through the door of his own dwelling, nor the gate of the fort, as an invisible, but baneful constellation[z], was exactly opposite, and shed dangerous influence in that direction. To remedy this, a large aperture was made in the wall of his house; but that opened into his neighbour's; and four or five more walls were to be cut through before the ambassador and his friends (including the principal men who were to accompany him) could reach the street. They then went to the beach, where it was intended to take a boat, and proceed two miles by sea, in order that their backs might be turned on the dreaded constellation; but the sea was rough, and the party hesitated about encountering a real danger to avoid an imaginary one. In this dilemma, the governor was solicited to let a part of the wall of the town be thrown down, that a mission, on which so much depended, might not be exposed to misfortune. The request, extraordinary as it may appear, was complied with, and the cavalcade marched over the breach to their tents. The astrologer rode near the ambassador, that he might continually remind him to keep his head in

[y] I write from the MS. Journal of Mr. Jukes, who was on the spot, and an eye-witness of all that is stated.

[z] The Persians call this invisible constellation Sukiz Yeldoz. It consists of a cluster of eight stars.

one position; by his aid, he reached his tents without any occurrence to disturb the good fortune which was augured to result from his having left his home at the propitious moment. The ambassador's conduct, while it satisfied his own mind, met, no doubt, with the highest approbation of the court, and it gave confidence to his attendants[a]; for the Persians, from the highest to the lowest, put faith in this delusive science. Many, however, of those whose occupation is to observe the aspect of the stars, and to calculate nativities, are by no means the dupes of their own knowledge. Their object is gain; and they make their art subservient to it. They flatter the ruling passion of those who consult them; and if apparently compelled to foretell a misfortune, it is often with no other view than to point out how it may be averted[b].

[a] Almost all the Persians in my camp were satisfied that the success or failure of my mission in 1800, would depend, in no slight degree, upon my entering Teheran at a fortunate moment. One of my Persian secretaries, who had consulted an astrologer, rode near me, as I approached the gateway, with a watch in his hand; and as I did not refuse to gratify him, by moving quicker or slower as he wished, my horse stept over the threshold at the right instant. This gave great joy to all the Persians who were friendly to the mission, as they anticipated more success from my attention to this trifle, than from all the other efforts I could make.

[b] On my return from Teheran in 1800, I fell into company with an astrologer, who insisted upon taking my horoscope, and foretelling my destiny. After the usual forms and calculations, he told me, that on my voyage to India, I should meet with a violent storm; and, after escaping it, should be made a prisoner. I observed, it was fortunate I had no belief in his skill; otherwise I should be unhappy in looking forward to misfortunes, from which I concluded there was no escape. There I was mistaken, he said; and, to satisfy me of the manner in which misfortune was to be averted, he would tell me a story. "When Jesus was sitting at the gate of Jerusalem, he saw a wood-cutter pass out of the city, carolling as he went along. 'How ignorant man is of his destiny!' said the son of Mary to his disciples. 'That poor fellow, who appears now so happy, will to-day perish in the wood.' When evening came, however, the man returned, singing louder than before. The disciples looked at each other, and at their master. Jesus, reading their thoughts, said, 'O ye of little faith! you doubt my knowledge: but know, that the man whom you see, carried only one small loaf of bread

The poets in Persia are still greater flatterers than the astrologers: but their occupation is less profitable. A few fortunate votaries of the muses enjoy the smiles of fortune: but the great majority of poets here, as in other countries, is poor; and, from their numbers, it is impossible they should be otherwise. Every person who has received a moderate education may, if he prefers a life of idleness to one of industry, assume the name of a poet; and the merest rhymer receives some additional respect from that honoured appellation. While some favoured poets are chanting the wonderful deeds of the king, or of the principal chiefs; or composing dewans, or "collections of odes," on the mystical subject of divine love; others are contented with panegyrizing the virtues, wisdom, bravery, and discernment, of all who bestow their bounty upon them, or allow them to partake of the good things on their table. They also make epigrams to amuse their patrons; and are alike ready to recite their own verses, or to quote the finest passages of their national poetry. The facility with which a certain degree of education is obtained at the colleges in the principal cities, and the indulgence to which their usages invite, produce a swarm of students, who pass their useless lives in indolence and poverty. Isfahan in particular abounds with these literary mendicants: and it is chiefly from the scholars educated at its colleges, and those at Shiraz, that the kingdom is inundated with vagrant poets, who lie in wait, not only for the high officers and wealthy men of their native country, but for all strangers whose rank or appearance afford them the slightest prospect

for his dinner; and when entreated by a person in distress to relieve him, he gave him half his loaf. God was pleased with this act, and saved his life. But go, and examine his bundle of wood, and you will find there the very snake which was appointed to cause his death.' They went, and saw the snake as Jesus had told them. You see," said the astrologer, "how it is possible to avert the decrees of the stars." I could not refuse that trifling reward to his ingenuity, which I had been prepared to deny to his pretended skill.

of a return for their venal lays. A professed ignorance of their language, or the expression of dislike for their productions, is no defence against their importunity and assurance. A poet, who came fifty miles from Shiraz, to welcome me with a complimentary ode, beautifully written upon ornamented paper, was told that the person he had so praised could hardly comprehend his lines, and had no taste for such compositions. "I must tell him a story, then," said he, "which will shew him how unnecessary the knowledge and taste he wants is to the fulfilment of my object.—Some years ago, when the Affghans had possession of Persia, a rude chief of that nation was governor of Shiraz. A poet composed a panegyric upon his wisdom, valour, and virtues. As he was taking it to the palace he met a friend at the outer gate, who inquired where he was going. He told him his purpose. His friend asked if he was insane to offer an ode to a barbarian, who hardly understood a word of Persian. 'All that you say may be true,' said he; 'but I am starving, and have no means of livelihood but making verses. So I must proceed.' He went, and stood before the governor with the ode in his hand. 'Who is that fellow?' exclaimed the Affghan; 'and what is that paper which he holds?'—'I am a poet,' replied the man; 'and the paper contains some poetry.'—'What is the use of poetry?' said the chief.—'To render great men, like you, immortal,' he replied, making a very profound bow.—'Let us hear some of it.' The poet began to read his composition aloud; but he had not finished the second stanza, when he was interrupted. 'Enough!' exclaimed the governor. 'I understand it all. Give the poor man some money; that is what he wants.' The poet received his present, and retired, quite delighted. He met his friend at the door, who accosted him again. 'You are, no doubt, now convinced of the folly of carrying odes to a man who does not understand a word of them.'—'Not understand!' he replied; 'you are quite mistaken. He has, beyond all men I ever met, the quickest apprehen-

sion of a poet's meaning.'" This story produced, in part, the effect which the poet had expected from his ode; but what he received had the common effect of exciting, instead of allaying cupidity; and the witty rhymer made several ingenious, but unsuccessful efforts to obtain more.

The art of printing is unknown in Persia; beautiful writing, therefore, is considered a high accomplishment. It is carefully taught in the schools, and those who excel in it are almost classed with literary men. They are employed to copy books; and some have attained to such eminence in this art, that a few lines by one of these celebrated penmen are often sold for a considerable sum [c].

The merchants are all taught to read and write, and some of them are men of learning. Their better acquaintance with foreign countries renders them free from prejudice; and their manners, though not so highly polished as those of the principal nobility and courtiers, are in general equal, if not superior, to those of the rest of their countrymen. The society of merchants of information and education is courted by the first nobles and the highest officers of the government, but the former, in general, avoid any political connexions: and this rule is recommended by the almost invariable ruin of all who forsake the path of profit to pursue that of ambition.

The principal merchants carry on all their mercantile correspondence in cipher, and every person has a different one. For in a country where there are no regular posts, their letters must be trusted to couriers, whom a small sum would bribe to betray their secrets to commercial rivals; and it is of great consequence that they should have the first intelligence of political changes, about which they would fear to write openly. The authenticity of a merchant's letters, as of his bills, depends entirely upon the seal. It is not usual to sign either; and they are not often written in the hand of

[c] I have known seven pounds given for four lines written by Derveish Mujeed, a celebrated penman, who has been dead some time, and whose beautiful specimens of writing are now scarce.

the person who sends them; so that it is the seal which is of importance: engraven upon it is the name and title, if he has one, of the person it belongs to, and the date when it was cut. The occupation of seal-cutter is one of much trust and some danger: he keeps a register of every seal he makes, and if one is stolen or lost by the party to whom he sold it, his life would answer for the crime of making another exactly the same. The person to whom the seal belongs, if in business, is obliged to take the most respectable witnesses of the occurrence, and to write to his correspondents, declaring all accounts and deeds with his former seal null from the day upon which it was lost.

Among the lower classes of the citizens there is not much perceptible difference of manner. That which exists arises from the nature of their respective occupations, and from the partial diffusion of knowledge. Almost all the tradesmen, and many of the mechanics, have received some education. There are schools[d] in every town and city, in which the rudiments of Persian and Arabic are taught. The child who attends one of them, after learning the alphabet, is made, as a religious duty, to read the Koran, in Arabic; which he usually does without understanding a word of it. He is next taught to read some fables in Persian, and to write a legible hand: here his education commonly ends; and unless he is led by inclination to study, or his occupation requires that he should practise what he has learnt, his lessons are soon forgotten. But this education, slight and superficial as it may seem, has the effect of changing the habits, and of introducing a degree of refinement among those who receive it, unknown to their ruder countrymen.

[d] The schools have been described by Chardin, and other travellers. They are so reasonable as to admit of the poorest tradesman sending his children to them; but are often under the management of ignorant pedants. It is not to be expected that a government like that of Persia should ever pay attention to the education of its subjects, though that is evidently the root from which all improvement must spring.

The Persians of all conditions are fond of society. Their table is in general well furnished; as the extraordinary cheapness of provisions of every kind, and the great plenty of fruit, enable even the lowest order of citizens to live well. The hog is the only animal they are positively forbidden to eat*. They are also, as Mahomedans, prohibited from tast ing wine: but this rule is often broken; and as, to use their own phrase, "there is as much sin in a glass as in a flagon," they usually, when they drink, indulge to excess. Indeed, they are so impressed with the idea that the sole pleasure of this forbidden liquor lies in its intoxicating effects, that nothing but constant observation can satisfy them that Christians are not all drunkards. "It is," they often remark, when speaking to one, "a privilege of your religion to be so, and therefore neither attended with shame nor disgrace." An English naval officer had come on shore at Abusheher, and mounted a spirited horse to take a ride. The awkwardness of the rider, who was nearly falling at every bound the animal took, amused a great number of spectators. Next day a Persian, who supplied the vessel with fruit and vegetables, came off, and seeing the officer, said to him, "I have saved your reputation; not a man who laughed at you yesterday has the least suspicion that you are a bad horseman."—"How have you managed that?" said the gentleman. "I told them," he replied, "that you, like every Englishman, ride admirably, as becomes a nation of soldiers, but that you were very drunk, and that was the reason of your not keeping your seat so firmly as you otherwise would have done." If told that, though we are permitted to use wine, excess is considered as degrading, and often, when it incapacitates for duty, as criminal, they listen with a smile of incredulity; for they believe it impossible that men, who are not withheld by religion, can deny themselves what they are led by the restraint imposed upon them to deem one of the most delightful of all enjoyments.

* There are several other meats, such as the hare, &c. which are deemed improper to be eaten.

The Persians wear hardly any under-linen; among the lower classes the clothes they once put on are seldom taken off till worn out. Nothing could preserve the health of a people, with such habits, but the ablutions enjoined by their religion, and the constant use of the hummums, or hot-baths, which are to be found in every city, town, and village. Some of these buildings are very splendid; and they are almost always clean, and well supplied with fresh water. A few pieces of the smallest copper coin of the country enable the poorest traveller, or labourer, to indulge in this delightful luxury.

The lower classes are entertained by the same exhibitions as the higher. Illuminations, fire-works, wrestlers, jugglers, buffoons, puppet-shows, musicians, and dancing-boys, amuse all ranks at public feasts: while riding on horseback, visiting, walking in gardens, and sitting in groups at their houses, or under the shade of a tree, to listen to a tale or poem, are the usual occupations of their idle hours. Dancing-girls were once numerous; and the first Persian poets have celebrated the beauty of their persons and the melody of their voices. They formed a part of the amusement at every entertainment till the reigning family ascended the throne; but at present they are not allowed at court, and are seldom seen, except in provinces at a distance from the capital; in Kûrdistan and Khorassan.

Nothing is of more consequence, as connected with the character of a people, than the laws and customs which regulate the relative situation and intercourse of the sexes. On it, perhaps beyond all other causes, depends the moral state of a country, and its progress in general improvement. Many nations, who have allowed their women to be publicly seen, have still remained in a barbarous state[f]; but in no instance have the inhabitants of a country where it was the

[f] Among the wandering tribes the females are unveiled. The lower Mahomedans in India do not veil; and the late Captain Grant, who travelled through Mekran in 1809, states, that it is not the custom in that country for the women to veil.

custom to immure them, and to deny them the benefit of education, ever attained a forward rank in civilized life. The influence of women, where they hold their just station in society, is not more calculated to soften the rough manners and to subdue the angry passions of man, than to stimulate him to generous, brave, and noble actions. The admiration of highly cultivated females is more rarely given to personal beauty, than to valour, virtue, and talents; and the hope of obtaining it constitutes one of the purest and highest motives to good and great actions. The religion of Mahomed sanctions, if it does not inculcate, usages which keep the female sex in a subservient state. The followers of this faith, therefore, may be pronounced to be strangers to this refined but powerful motive of human action. In Persia the lower classes deem females important in proportion as they are useful in domestic life: the higher consider them as born for their sensual gratification. Women have, in fact, no assigned place, but are what their husbands, or rather lords, may choose to make them. A favorite, by the power of her mental or personal charms, may establish an influence over her domestic tyrant; or a woman may obtain peculiar respect on account of her superior birth, and the consequent dread her husband entertains of her relations. Other ties may produce still more remarkable effects: and habit and affection may lead a son to maintain an attention or obedience to his mother, that gives her an importance beyond the walls of the haram. But these rare instances, though they shew that there may sometimes be women of superior knowledge and character, cannot counteract the evil consequences which their exclusion from society has upon the manners and morals of men.

The Persians, like all Mahomedans, consider themselves entitled to an unlimited indulgence in the pleasures of the haram: and though restrained by religion from marrying more than four wives, they conceive themselves at liberty to increase the number of females in their family to any extent



that suits their inclination or their convenience. The priesthood are expected to be the most moderate in their use of this indulgence: and we may judge of their habits, from the remark of a very grave historian [g], who, after an animated eulogium on the character of a priest of high reputation, concludes by saying, "the continence of this virtuous man was so extraordinary, that it is affirmed, that during his life he never had intercourse with any other females than his four legitimate wives!!")

The Persians are entitled, by law and usage, to take females, not within the prohibited degrees of kindred, in three different ways: by marriage, by purchase, and by hire. Their marriages are made according to prescribed forms. The female is betrothed [h] by the parents: she may, however, refuse her consent when the priest comes to require it; and the marriage cannot proceed if she continues averse to it: but this rarely happens, as the parties never see one another before they are united, and seldom hear any reports of each other but what are favourable. A woman has this and many other rights according to the Mahomedan law: but a being, who is first immured by her parents, and afterwards by her husband, and whose name it is almost a crime to pronounce, can practically have little protection from these useless privileges. The nuptial ceremony must take place before two or more witnesses [i]. The contract is regularly made out by an officer of the law, who attends. It is then attested and given to the female, who preserves it with great

[g] Sherrif-ood-deen, author of "The History of Kûrdistan."

[h] Persons, both male and female, are often betrothed in infancy. If this is done by their parents, the marriage must be confirmed when they attain the age of puberty: but if by any other than parents, the most respectable Mahomedan doctors maintain it is null, if either both, or one of the parties desire that it should be cancelled.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 102, 103.

[i] There must be two male witnesses, or one man and two women. These must be freemen, sane, adult, and Mahomedans.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 74.

care, for it is also her title to her dower [k], which is the principal part of her provision in the event of her husband's death, and her sole dependance [l] if she is divorced. Marriages in Persia, as in all eastern countries, are very expensive. It is not unusual for a man to waste the means he has spent his life in acquiring on his wedding day. The display made on this occasion is thought a point affecting personal reputation, and every one endeavours to surpass his equals with a ruinous spirit of emulation.

A Persian may purchase as many female slaves as he likes: and their condition is no way altered by the manner in which they live in his family. The sweeper of his house, and the partner of his bed, are alike exposed to be sold again if they have been purchased: but this right is seldom exercised, it being at variance with the jealous sense of honour felt by almost all Mahomedans with regard to females with whom they have cohabited.

[k] There is no point deemed of more consequence by the Mahomedan law than the dower. The most learned doctors, however, have disagreed widely on its interpretation. A marriage, some hold, is valid, even though there is no dower; but in such cases, as also where an excessive one has been agreed upon, the law may interpose and settle it upon just and rational principles. The lowest dower that can be legally given is ten dirhems, or between four and five shillings.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 122.

[l] The right of the female to this settlement is guarded, not only by law and usage, but by the protection of her male relations, who are in general the witnesses. It is made payable from the property of the husband; and if he has none, the wife's portion is secured upon whatever he may hereafter possess. The dower is made over to the female, or her assigns, before the consummation of the marriage. It becomes her entire right: and it is not unusual for a mother to give a favorite son her dower; which, when vested with her authority, he can compel his father to pay. The law on dower constitutes, as was no doubt intended, a considerable check upon the men of every Mahomedan nation; and it is one of which the women of Persia are very jealous. A woman, according to the Mahomedan law, may exonerate her husband from any part, or even from the whole, of the dower. There are, however, rarely instances of the whole being restored, though the wife sometimes gives up a part at the earnest solicitation of the husband or his friends.

The marriage by contract, and for a limited period, is peculiar to the Persians. It is said to have been a custom in Arabia when Mahomed first introduced his religion there: but though he tolerated it, Omar abolished it as a species of legal prostitution, inconsistent with good morals: the Turks, therefore, and other Soonees who respect the decrees of this caliph, hold it in abhorrence. The parties agree to live together for a fixed time, which varies from a few days to ninety-nine years. The sum agreed upon as the lady's hire is mentioned in the contract, which is made out by the cauzee, or a moollah, and regularly witnessed. The man may dissolve the contract when he chooses; but the female has a right, from the hour when the deed is signed, to the whole sum agreed to be paid to her. If the parties are willing, the deed is renewed when it expires. This contract conveys no rights to the female beyond the sum specified as her hire. Under no circumstances is she deemed entitled to share in the property left by the person she is contracted to. This engagement usually takes place between persons of very unequal condition. The woman is generally of a very inferior family; and her state can only be termed one of legal concubinage [m].

A man can divorce his wife at pleasure: but there is an expense and scandal attending it, which renders it very unfrequent. It may be said never to occur but among the lower classes: a man of rank would consider himself disgraced by what would expose a woman, who had been his wife, to be seen by others. The forms of divorce among the Sheahs differ in some trifling points from those of the Soonees. Divorces are never on account of adultery, as that crime, if proved, subjects a woman who has been legally married to death. The general causes are complaints of badness of temper, or extravagance, on the part of the husbands; and

[m] The law provides for the support of children born in this state of legal concubinage; and a woman is prohibited, after parting from the person she was contracted to, from forming a new engagement till a period has elapsed sufficient to secure a man against being burdened with spurious offspring.

of neglect, or cruel usage, on that of their wives. If the husband sues for a divorce, he is compelled to pay his wife's dower; but if she sues for it, her claim is cancelled. Hence it is not unfrequent among the lower orders, when a man desires to be rid of his partner, to use her so ill, that she is forced to institute a suit for separation; which, if granted, abrogates all her claims upon her husband.

Some peculiar usages of the different cities have been noticed, particularly the right of insurrection, claimed by the inhabitants of Cazveen, when driven to it by oppression [n]. The division of the chief cities into wards, with the names of Hyderee and Neâmuttee, which one author [o] has ascribed to Shah Abbas the Great, still exists, and continues to excite as much animosity as formerly. There is at all times a jealousy between these parties; but during the last three days of the Mohurrum they attack each other with violence. The object they contend for appears to be merely the honour of triumph. If a mosque is decorated by one party, the other, if they can, drive them from it, and destroy their flags or ornaments. If they force their opponents from their houses, they do not enter or plunder them, but make a mark on each door with a hatchet, as a token of victory. These frays are often very serious, and many lives are lost [p]; but no effort is made to abolish a usage which divides those whose union might make them formidable to government.

[n] Vol. i. page 443.

[o] *Hanway*, vol. ii. p. 104.—Hanway terms these parties Peleuk and Feleuk, names now unknown. Langlés, in his edition of Chardin, vol. ii. p. 321, concludes that these opposite sects derive their name from Shaikh Hyder, the ancestor of the Seffavean family, and from Neâmutullah, the name assumed by the adherents of the dynasty of the White Sheep, which was destroyed by the sect of Hyderee, or adherents of Ismael Soofee.

[p] I find it stated in a Persian MS. which gives a particular account of several of these frays, that a kind of account-current is kept of the men of the different parties killed. The ward, the inhabitants of which have slain the greatest number, are fined the price of blood for the balance, whatever it may be; and the sum collected is divided among the widows and children of the deceased.

The dress of the Persians has been often described, by ancient and modern travellers. That of the men has changed materially within the last century. The turban is now worn by none but the Arabian inhabitants. The Persians wear a long cap covered with lamb's wool, the appearance of which is sometimes improved by being encircled with a Cashmere shawl[q]. The inhabitants of the principal towns are fond of dressing richly. Their upper garments are made of chintz, silk, or cloth, and are often trimmed with gold or silver lace: they also wear brocade: and in winter their clothes are lined with furs, of which they import a great variety. It is not customary for any person, except the king, to wear jewels: but nothing can exceed his profusion of these ornaments; and his subjects seem peculiarly proud of this magnificence. They assert, that when the monarch is dressed in his most splendid robes, and seated in the sun, the eye cannot gaze on the dazzling brilliancy[r].

The slaves are not numerous, and cannot be distinguished by any peculiar habits or usages, further than that they are generally more trusted and favoured by their superiors. The name of slave may be said to imply confidence on one part and attachment on the other. They are mostly Georgians or Africans; and, being obtained or purchased when young, are usually brought up in the Mahomedan religion. Their master, who takes the merit of their conversion, appropriates the females to his own haram, or to the service of his wives: and, when the males are of a proper age, he marries them to a female slave in the family, or to a free woman. Their children are brought up in the house, and have a rank only

[q] This custom was very general; but a late mandate has prohibited shawls being worn round the head, except by persons who have a special privilege from the king to do so. This order was given with a view to encourage the Persian manufactories, and to lessen the importation of Cashmere shawls.

[r] Perhaps no prince possesses jewels of equal value with the King of Persia. The finest of these were plundered by Nâdir Shah from the monarchs of Delhi.

below relations. In almost every family of consequence, the person most trusted is a house-born slave; and instances of their betraying their charge, or abusing the confidence placed in them, are very rare.

These observations apply peculiarly to the inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages. Many of the customs of the wandering tribes are different, and merit a distinct notice. Their chiefs during peace usually reside at court, or at provincial capitals; and leave their followers, whom they occasionally visit, to be governed by the elders of the different branches and families. The number united into one body is regulated by the means of subsistence. They in general change their residence with the season, and may be said, throughout the year, to enjoy a fine climate. They pitch their dark tents on the finest of the plains over which they have a right of pasture; and the encampment is usually on the banks of a rivulet, or stream. It is commonly in a square; and the abode of the principal elder is only to be distinguished from that of the lowest man in the tribe by its size. All are of the same coarse materials, and in the same shape. The horses, mules, and sheep, are turned loose, to feed around the encampment. While the young men, if not hunting, are generally seen sitting in circles, smoking, or indulging in repose, the women are busily occupied with their domestic duties, or aiding aged men and boys in tending the flocks. These tribes, unless very strong, are wont to pitch their tents near mountains, that their flocks and families may be within reach of a place of security on the occurrence of danger. Along the base of the hills which divide Kûrdistan from Aderbejan and Irak, every valley is occupied, during the spring and summer, by the camps of these wanderers*.

* Small encampments of gypsies are frequently met with in Persia, particularly in Aderbejan. The habits and occupations of the families we saw in that country appeared very similar to those of the vagrant tribes in England.

The men of some of the rudest tribes are accused by the other natives of paying hardly any attention to the forms of religion, or to its prescriptions concerning food; and there is no doubt that the accusation is in some degree just. They openly eat the flesh of the hare [t], which is classed by Mahomedan divines among meats, not indeed legally prohibited, but deemed abominable; and there is reason to believe, that many of them are not deterred by the Koran from feasting, when they have an opportunity, upon swine's flesh. A Kurd of some respectability said to an English gentleman, that he thought the tribe he belonged to resembled Europeans more than Mahomedans. He was asked how?—"Why," said he, "we eat hog's flesh, keep no fasts, and say no prayers [u]." He had seen no acts of public worship among the few Europeans he had met with, and he was unacquainted with the maxim, which teaches them not to pray in the streets, "that they may be seen of men."

Though the chiefs of the principal tribes, from being brought up at court, or at the capital of a province, are often as well educated and as polished in their manners as the higher classes of the other Persians; and though some of their followers, who accompany them amid scenes compa-

The Persians call them Kârâchee; a Turkish term, which may be translated "the black people;" and which, probably, has been given to them from their complexion being darker than that of the natives.

[t] In 1800 I one day ran a hare near the encampment of some Affshâr families: a number of young men sprung upon their horses, and joined in the chase. One, who was well mounted, and had a fine dog, rode very hard over some rocky ground, and his dog caught the hare, which he immediately tied to his saddle. I asked him, why he did so? "You cannot eat the hare," I said, "as you know it is *mukrooh*, or 'abominable.'"—"Do you think," he replied, "I would have hazarded my life, and half killed my horse and my dog, to be deterred, after all, by what some fool of a moollah has said, from eating this hare? I would eat his father!" and he rode off, delighted with his prize.

[u] I received this anecdote from Mr. Jukes, to whom the Kurd (the commander of a party that attended the mission as a guard at Kermanshah) addressed himself.

ratively civilized, cannot be distinguished from the inhabitants of the cities, whose manners they adopt, and among whom they frequently intermarry and settle; the bulk of the tribe, who remain always in tents, or in their rude villages, continue in a state of the most barbarous ignorance. They circumcise their children at the proper age, and contract marriages according to the prescribed customs: but they are said, and probably with truth, to be very neglectful of the other Mahomedan regulations. Though some, who desire a character for superior piety, go through the regular ablutions, and the forms of prayer, they are, in general, entirely ignorant of the words they ought to repeat. A Persian writer, who has related some curious facts on the manners of this class, states[x], that, when a young man, he was saying his prayers at the appointed time, before a person of the tribe of Shah Sevund[y]. Observing that this man did not do the same, he asked him if he never addressed the Almighty according to the forms prescribed by the holy prophet? "I now and then bend my head, and raise it again," was the reply, "as I have just now seen you do; but I repeat no prayers, and never, indeed, learnt any." The same writer informs us, that a citizen, the guest of a member of some tribe, to whom he had been useful in disposing of his sheep, when he began one morning, according to his practice, to read a chapter of the Koran aloud, was assailed with a stick by his hostess, who asked him in a rage if he conceived one of the family was dead, that he thought it necessary to read that book. The husband, though he reproved his wife's violence, told his friend he should have known better than to anticipate misfortune, by going through a ceremony only used at funerals. This rude race seldom receive any religious instruction. If a priest of

[x] Persian MS.

[y] This tribe has been before mentioned: (vol. i. page 369). They are still numerous.

a neighbouring village visits their tents, and summons them to prayers, they listen to him with impatience; and, if any accident happens to their flocks while they are attending divine worship, they load him with abuse, and reproach him with being the cause of the misfortune[a].

The wandering tribes are all plunderers; and glory in acknowledging it. They are continually recounting their own successful acts of depredation, or those of their ancestors; and from the chief to the lowest man, they boast openly of deeds for which men would be capitally punished under a better ordered government. Every sentiment that escapes them evinces their attachment to their predatory habits. They often regret the tranquillity of their country; and speak with rapture of those periods of confusion, when every man who "had a horse, a sword, and a heart, could live in comfort and happiness." When on the march towards the royal camp at Sooltaneah, I asked a chief of a tribe, what ruins those were on the right of the road? His eyes glistened. "It is more than twenty years," he said, "since I accompanied my uncle in a night attack to plunder and destroy that village, and it has never been rebuilt. Its inhabitants are a bad race, and our enemies; however, they have settled near it, and are again become rich. I trust in God," he added with emphasis, "that the present tranquillity will not last; and if old times return, I will have another blow at these fellows before I die." A still more remarkable instance occurred on my first mission. When hunting one day near the line of march, we came to a deep ravine: as we were crossing it, an old Persian of the tribe of Lac, then in my service, turned round, and said to me with a smile:—"In this ravine, sir, about twenty years ago, I, and ten others of my tribe, lay in wait for a caravan. We attacked them, and killed five or six useless fellows of

[a] This was stated to me by a moollah, who was in the constant habit of visiting these tribes.

merchants and mule-drivers: the rest ran away, and we found plenty of plunder. I lived gloriously for some years on the produce of the shawls that fell to my share; but all my cash is gone, and I am now a poor old fellow. Yet, after all, it is some consolation to think one has had a taste of the good things of this world." This race, as may be concluded from these anecdotes, are strangers to the causes which promote civilisation and improvement, and insensible to the blessing of security and good order. They view every thing through the medium they have been accustomed to; and power only possesses charms in proportion as it ministers to their passions. But this observation may perhaps be applied with equal justice to their superiors. The reigning king, when I endeavoured to explain to him the nature and operation of the various checks in the British government, exclaimed, after listening with great attention, "Your king then appears to be no more than the first magistrate of the state! So limited an authority may be lasting, but can have no enjoyment! My power is very different: it is real enjoyment! I can elevate or degrade all the high nobles and officers you see around me at pleasure: but then, it is true, there is no security for my family possessing the throne. Right in Persia always has and always will belong to the sword." It is not surprising that the military populace, where the monarch professes these sentiments, should measure their title to consideration, and their power of attaining enjoyments, by their means of pillaging or oppressing. If a prince or chief of high rank evince a contrary disposition, his conduct excites very opposite feelings to admiration. A man of one of these tribes, who was sent to accompany two English gentlemen [a] through a part of Persia, contended that a prince of the blood whom he served had better claims to the crown, because he was more dreaded than one of his royal brothers, whom they had extolled for his humanity,

[a] Mr. Ellis and Captain Macdonald, who were travelling from Sennah in Kûrdistan to Hamadan in Irak in 1810.

virtue, and intelligence. "You see," he said, "that small village before us. If the prince you praise were where we are, the inhabitants would be at this moment running to meet him, and be eager to pitch his tents: whereas, if my master were here, so great is the terror of his name, they would already have fled to the summit of the neighbouring hills. Now, I ask you, which is the most proper of these two to govern Persia?" The same person, who was an intelligent man of his class, was very inquisitive about the condition of England; and, after listening with delight to their accounts of the richness of its fields, the beauty of its towns, and the great wealth of its inhabitants, he exclaimed, "What a number of plunderers you must have there[b]!" On being informed that the laws restrained men from plundering, he asked with astonishment, "What then can be the occupation of so numerous a population?"

Though the members of the military tribes are proud of being called plunderers, they hold the name of thieves in abhorrence. Force implies strength, fraud weakness. There are, however, some of the lesser clans whose occupation is avowedly theft; but even these pretend to honour. When the British mission passed through Kûrdistan, the camp was one day pitched near the huts of some families of the tribe of Ghishkee. The women were employed in baking, spinning, and weaving carpets; while the men were, as usual, wandering idle, or in search of game. The English gentlemen, who had been told that this tribe were the greatest thieves in Persia, and that the children were beat daily by their mothers to accustom them to pain, that when they were caught stealing they might not be intimidated by blows into confessing their accomplices, asked an old man if these accu-

[b] When I returned from Persia in 1801, a man of some rank belonging to a tribe in Khorassan, who desired to visit India, accompanied me. I was anxious that he should see and admire Calcutta, and sent a person to show him every part of it. When he returned, I asked him what he thought of it. "Ajab jaêê buraee chapou ast!"—"It is a noble place to plunder!"

sations were true. "We are abused," he said, "more than we deserve; for, after all, our theft is only a kind of war. We never rob or steal, except from those with whom our ruler, the Waly of Sennah, is on bad terms. When Persia is in confusion, then is our harvest: but now these Kajirs have every thing their own way, and we are likely to be ruined." Some suspicion being expressed as to the truth of his statement, the old man said with animation, "that his tribe had been appointed to guard the English camp, and that we should have an opportunity of judging of their honesty, when trust was reposed in them, by their manner of performing that duty." He had a right to boast that they were faithful guards, for not an article was lost while they attended the mission.

The Persians have always been famed for their hospitality to strangers; but the chiefs of the warlike tribes are beyond all others remarkable for it. The Khan of the tribe of Karagoozoloo had prepared, for the British mission[c], his own house in the town, and removed to a country-seat at some distance. To this he one day invited the whole party; and, at his particular desire, every person, from the highest to the lowest, went. The train of the English envoy was increased by that of a Persian ambassador and his suite, who were proceeding to India. The cavalcade reached the Khan's abode at an early hour, and stayed till near midnight. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the entertainment. They were not, however, aware, till they had taken leave, of the extent of the attention they had been treated with. When they mounted to return home, they were informed, that while they had been at dinner, a sudden and severe frost having come on, every horse and mule of the party, amount-

[c] I left Teheran in January, 1801, and arrived at Hamadan, on my way to Bagdad, on the 11th of February. The cold was excessive, and the whole country was covered with snow about four feet deep. The Governor of Hamadan was Mahomed Hoossein Khan Karagoozoloo.

ing to nearly two hundred, had been rough shod, to prevent any accident occurring to the guests of the khan.

The tribes of Persia, as well as of Arabia, boast, that when once they pledge themselves to give protection, their word is inviolable: but the faithless barbarity of Kulb Ali Khan, of the tribe of Fylee, has injured, if not destroyed, the claim, which even the worst of these plunderers had before established to the confidence of the defenceless stranger. This villain invited two English officers [d], who were travelling near his camp, to be his guests, and murdered them. His crime appeared to excite at the moment a very general indignation; but, to the reproach of the government and of his countrymen, he has hitherto escaped punishment, and continues to commit depredations amid the mountains between Khuzistan and the Pashalic of Bagdad.

The attachment of the tribes to the families of their chiefs has been noticed. They will seldom consent to obey any other person; and instances often occur, where an infant is carried into the field, to obtain the services of those who consider him as their only lawful leader. If a general levy of the tribe be required for the service of the state, it is effected with difficulty and delay; but a call, connected with their own safety, or that of their chieftain, is promptly obeyed. On such occasions, the signal to assemble flies, to use their own phrase, "from tent to tent, from hill to hill." We are struck at meeting, among these rude families, with so many usages familiar to us; and the interest we take in inquiring into their customs is increased by the recollection that they are those of our forefathers.

The wandering tribes maintain a constant intercourse with the principal cities and towns. They generally carry on a petty commerce in horses and sheep, which they breed; and in carpets, which are woven by their females. In return,

[d] Captain Grant and Lieutenant Fotheringham. The indignation which all felt at this crime, was greatly increased by the high character of its victims.

they receive grain, cloth, money, and articles of hardware. The unwarlike part of the population are termed Taujeck, which means a person of civil occupation. But this class are not confined to cities. They are often attached to the wandering tribes, and employed by them to cultivate their fields, and to tend their flocks. The tribes have not, however, at present, many subjects of this description. They decrease as the government advances in vigour, and can release them from a dependance upon their rude masters. It is remarkable, that all the Taujecks in Affghanistan and part of Tartary speak Persian ; and this fact, while it aids us in fixing the ancient limits of the empire, appears to support a conjecture before made [e], that though these countries have been overrun by martial tribes at different periods, those races of their inhabitants who pursue the occupations of civil life, have remained unchanged, amid all these revolutions.

The ceremonies practised by the wandering tribes on the circumcision of their male children, on giving a name to a child, or in the burial of the dead, are substantially the same as those of the citizens, and of all other Mahomedans ; but they continue to preserve, at the funerals of chiefs and soldiers of high reputation, the usages of their more remote ancestors. The charger of the departed warrior, carrying his arms and clothes [f], accompanies the procession ; and those who desire to show their respect for the deceased, often send a horse without a rider, but with arms upon his saddle, to swell the train of the mourning cavalcade [g]. Every trace of these rude rites is interesting, as it marks the origin of customs still observed by the most civilized nations.

[e] Vol. I. p. 98.

[f] His clothes and arms are put upon the favourite horse ; the cap he wore is placed on the pique of his saddle ; the cloth with which he girded his loins is bound round the horse's neck, while the boots are laid across the saddle.

[g] I find from the MS. of Meer [illegible] that the same usages prevail in Tartary.

The principal ceremonies of marriage among the tribes are the same as those observed by the inhabitants of the cities and towns. In like manner they settle a dower upon their wives. The ring is sent in all due form, and presents are interchanged between the families. They also stain their hands with a red dye [h] the day before the marriage; and, like the citizens, squander their property on their nuptial feasts. These feasts, among men of rank or wealth, are protracted to thirty or forty days; and with the poorest person they continue three. Indeed, that period is requisite for the observance of the established forms. On the first day the company are assembled; the second is appropriated to the important ceremony of staining the hands; and the third to the marriage. Among all ranks the bridegroom appears, on his wedding-day, dressed in all the finery he can obtain; and on that day he receives from his relations and friends the same obsequious attention which is paid by inferiors to a superior of elevated rank. All who come into his presence sit below him [i]; offerings are brought to the bridegroom from his relations; and these are received with great ceremony by some of his friends, who act on that day as his servants. Two persons, generally near relations, are appointed to carry his orders into execution: these are termed his right-hand man and left-hand man [k]; and if the bridegroom is a child, or bashful, these men act for him, and increase the mirth of the wedding by a thousand tricks they play on his relations and friends. They pretend to receive the bridegroom's commands as those of a monarch, to seize one person, to fine another, and to flog a third. These marriage pranks are usually preconcerted; but even when not, they never give offence, as instances of bad humour at

[h] This dye is called hennah.

[i] If the governor of a province were to attend the marriage ceremony of his servant, he would sit below him.—*Persian MS.*

[k] The bridegroom's right-hand man is, in Turkish, called *sákdesh*; and his left-hand man *soldesh*.

a nuptial festival are very rare. The joys in the bride's house are more moderate: the lady is bathed, perfumed, and dressed in the richest clothes her family can afford. She also sits in state; and, before she leaves her own house, or tent, she receives presents from a number of her friends. When this ceremony is over, she is covered with a scarlet veil, mounted upon horseback, and conveyed to her husband's dwelling, who receives her at the threshold. These usages are now almost as common among the citizens as among the wandering tribes. It remains to speak of those customs which are more peculiar to the latter; several of which, from their character, probably existed among them long before the introduction of Mahomedanism.

On the morning that the bride is to be conveyed to the house or tent of the bridegroom, her friends assemble. If she is the daughter of a chief, or of an elder, she is accompanied by all the horsemen whose attendance he can command: the party proceed, accompanied by dancers and music; and, if the place of their destination is near, they take a circuitous road to it, that this part of the ceremony may be prolonged. When they appear at a distance the bridegroom mounts his horse, and, attended by his friends, proceeds to meet the cavalcade. He holds an apple or an orange[1] in his hand, and, when sufficiently near to be certain of his aim, he throws it at her with considerable force, it being deemed fortunate to do so. All is silent attention from the time that the parties come near each other till this act, which is the signal for general uproar and confusion. The bridegroom wheels his horse round, and rides at full speed to his place of abode. Every horseman of the bride's party endeavours to seize him; and he that succeeds has his horse, saddle, and clothes as a reward. This, however, is only the case where the party is wealthy: among the poorer a few

[1] The usage of throwing the apple or orange is also common among citizens, who throw it at their brides from the threshold or balcony of the house.

pieces of silver are paid as a fine to the successful pursuer. The bridegroom however is not often taken; for, as it is a point of honour to escape, he rides the fleetest horse of his tribe, and his friends endeavour by every means to favour his retreat.

When the bride arrives at her future residence, the women by whom she is attended entreat her not to alight. The husband's relations crowd around her, and beg that she will. This is the moment of her power: every male of the family she is about to enter brings her presents proportionate to his ability, or his regard to her husband. They also solicit her to give up part of her dower, and their instances are afterwards repeated by the husband: but the women of Persia are naturally tenacious of their only security against bad usage or accident; and, though they sometimes return a part, they usually reserve enough to render it a check upon those to whom they intrust their future comfort and happiness. At these marriages the men and women dance[m]; and the most polished chiefs, though they may conform, in the marriages of their own family, with the usages of the cities in which they live, are in the habit of visiting the tents of their followers on these joyous occasions; and of contributing, by their munificence, and their unreserved hilarity, to the mirth of these wedding feasts.

The usage of divorce among the tribes is the same as among the inhabitants of cities, but is of still rarer occurrence. This may be ascribed to various causes. The virtue of the females is more strict: they are, from their labour, more valuable to their husbands; and the poorer class have seldom the means of paying a dower to a wife whom they divorce. It is dangerous, too, in such a community, to offend a female of a respectable family: for, though her relations are prompt to be her executioners if she is proved

[m] They stand in a line or ring and join hands, while the music plays, and a person sings in cadence with it. The whole party join in a rude chorus.

guilty of adultery, they are her strenuous supporters as long as she is innocent of that crime. We are told by an intelligent Persian [n], who has written a short treatise upon the manners of these tribes, that the deepest pledge they can give of their resolution to conquer or perish in any enterprise they are engaged in, is to go through the ceremony of a conditional divorce. They pronounce their wives divorced unless success crowns their efforts. "In former days," he observes, "a man would have been deemed despicable who outlived defeat after this ceremony: but it is now too often an empty boast; and men are not ashamed to fly the moment after they have uttered a vow deemed by their ancestors the most sacred that a man of honour could make."

The male part of the tribes pass their time in riding, military exercises, and hunting. Their fare is coarse and moderate: they now and then feast upon meat; but their general diet is a hard black bread, sour milk, and curds. They do not often indulge in intoxicating liquors: their chief delight is to sit together, smoking their pipes, and listening to songs and tales, or looking at the tricks, grimaces, and witticisms of buffoons [o], (who are to be found in every quarter of Persia,) and some of whom are perfectly skilled in their art. A Persian chief [p] of a Kurdish tribe who remained several days with the British mission, near Kermanshah, in 1801, had in his train a jester, who possessed very versatile and extraordinary talents. One day upon the march, this fellow, addressing the English envoy, said, "You are, no doubt, very proud of the discipline you have established among your

[n] Persian MS.

[o] The Persians say, that a good Loottee, or "buffoon," ought to be able to laugh, cry, weep, sit still, and dance at the same moment. Some of these jesters approach very near this idea of perfection.

[p] Mehdee Khan Kulhoor, the chief of a tribe, who can mount four thousand horse. This nobleman possessed more accomplishments than any I met with in Persia. He was not only a scholar, but a poet and a painter; and he had the reputation of being a good soldier.

Persian servants, who march in your front in as regular a style as your own soldiers. How long, Sir, has it taken you to introduce this order among my countrymen?"—"About six months," was the reply. "Now," said he, "if you will permit me, you shall see that I will, in less than six minutes, destroy all that you have done in six months." Leave being granted, he rode near the Persian horsemen, who were leading the state-horses, and who had strict orders not to leave their ranks. He had noticed that they were almost all of the Lac and Fylee tribes, whose chief residence is among the mountains of Louristan; and he began to sing, as if to himself, but in a clear and loud voice, a song, which commenced, "Attend to me, ye sons of Louristan; I sing of the glorious deeds of your forefathers." Before he had finished his song, to which all were listening with attention, the whole cavalcade was thrown into confusion by the kicking of horses, the Persians having broke the line of march and crowded round to hear him more distinctly. The jester laughed heartily at the success of his joke, and said to the envoy, "Do not be distressed at the fate of your fine discipline: I have heard of a man who, with nothing but the song I have just sung, collected an army, and was called a king [q] for several weeks."

The men of the wandering tribes delight to tell or listen to romantic tales: some of them not only make themselves masters of this art, but learn to recite verses, particularly those of Firdousee. A person who has cultivated this talent enjoys great respect among his associates, who frequently call on him to amuse an idle hour by transporting his hearers into the regions of fancy, or to excite their minds to deeds of valour, by repeating lines which celebrate the renown of their ancestors.

[q] This, I am assured, was the fact. A chief of no pretensions had, during the confusion after the death of Nâdir Shah, gone about Louristan with some musicians and singers, who continually played and sung this favourite air; and he by this means collected about five thousand followers, and proclaimed himself king.

The women of the tribes are more respected than those who dwell in cities, because they are more useful to the community. They not only share the bed, but the fatigues and dangers of their husbands; and the masculine habits they acquire are not displeasing, for they seem suited to their condition of life. If they are not of high rank, they perform all the domestic and menial offices of their home; and strangers who visit their houses and tents receive the kindest and most hospitable welcome from them. But there is nothing in their manner that can be mistaken: it is fearless, but not forward, and proceeds from the consciousness of security, not the absence of shame. Though in general their complexion is dark and sun-burnt, they have sometimes, when young, considerable beauty: a sense of their free condition gives lustre to their eyes; and they often add to fine features a very graceful form. But, among the lower orders, such beauty is destroyed by hard labour, and continual exposure to the climate.

A Persian gentleman [r], remarkable for his polished manners and the gaiety of his disposition, describes his entertainment by the females of one of these tribes in a very characteristic manner. "When I arrived at the village of Sennah [s], which is inhabited by the Turkish tribes of Khuzâl and Affshâr, I was invited to take up my abode in the house of one of the chiefs of the latter, and received the greatest attention from all his family. The ladies, who, according to custom, were unveiled, were particularly kind. The daughter of my host was about fifteen years of age, and more beautiful than I can express. When I said I was thirsty, she ran and brought me a cup of pure water. It was a draught from the fountain of life, brought by an

[r] Mahomed Hoossein Khan, son of the late Mehdee Ali Khan, who was sent by the Government of Bombay on a mission to the Court of Persia in 1798.

[s] In Irak. The name is the same as that of the capital of Ardelân.

angel: but it increased, instead of extinguishing the flame her bright dark eyes had kindled in my breast[1]." After describing the pain it gave him to depart from this dwelling without daring to show, even by a look, the passion he entertained for this young beauty, he very sensibly observes—"A vain and uninformed man might have mistaken the manner of my fair cup-bearer; but I had experience of these Eellyât ladies, and well knew that nothing was meant but that kindness and hospitality with which they treat all strangers who visit their tents or houses. I believe they are virtuous beyond all other women in Persia; and the man who should even attempt seduction, would be sacrificed to the implacable honour of their male relations." The habits of these females fit them for the scenes they are occasionally exposed to. When riding near a small encampment of Affshâr families, I expressed my doubts to a Persian noble, who was with me, as to their reputed boldness and hardihood, and particularly their horsemanship. He called to a young woman of a handsome appearance, and asked her in Turkish if she was not a soldier's daughter? She said she was. "And you expect to be a mother of soldiers?" She smiled. "Mount that horse," said he, pointing to one with a bridle, but without a saddle, "and show this European envoy the difference between a girl of a tribe, and a citizen's daughter." She sprung upon the animal, and, setting off at full speed, did not stop till she reached the summit of a small hill, covered with loose stones: when there, she waved her hand over her head, and then came down at the same rate she had ascended. Nothing could be more dangerous than the ground she galloped over: but she appeared quite fearless, and seemed delighted at having an opportunity of vindicating the females of her tribe from the reproach of being like the ladies of cities.

The poverty and usages of the wandering tribes often

[1] Mahomed Hoossein Khan's MS. Journal.

prevent the men from marrying even the number of wives allowed by the law. Many have only one; unless she is old, barren, or unfit to work, they do not marry another. For they can seldom afford to support more than one wife: and, from the liberty which the females enjoy, their quarrels, were there several in a family, would be embarrassing; thus marriage, which is considered as one of the chief bonds of union between the men of a tribe, would become a constant source of discord and contention. The practice of hiring wives for a certain period, which prevails in the cities and towns, is held in abhorrence by the females of tribes; and they have frequently been known to attack priests in the most violent manner, whom they believed to have sanctioned a usage so degrading. But though these women enjoy more freedom and consideration than others in Persia, they are still far off from the rank assigned to the sex among the civilised nations of Europe: they toil, while the lord-like husband spends his hours in indolence, or amusement, and they are regarded more as servants than associates. If a man of a wandering tribe has not so many wives and slaves as his religion permits, or as his brother of the city, it is merely because his poverty, or the condition of the society he belongs to, limits his desires. The moment his situation alters, he is prompt to riot in every kind of dissipation; and the partner, who more than shares his toils, has no chance of an equal participation in the good fortune that may attend him. If he is raised to a high station, he deems an increased indulgence of his sensuality one of the chief pleasures of advancement; and when he settles in a city, he at once adopts the customs of a citizen. His first wives, if he has more than one, are compelled to sacrifice the liberty they before enjoyed, and to endure the neglect which naturally arises from his power of obtaining younger and more beautiful females. Among these tribes, however, maternal claims are always respected. The mother's influence over her son usually continues through life; and she is ready to maintain

that authority, which is grounded on habit and affection, by ministering to his gratification. It is her duty to preside over his family; and, if he is rich, he usually intrusts her not only with the choice of his female partners, but with their management. The anticipation of this power makes the women anxiously desire to have male children: the birth of a son is hailed with joy; that of a daughter is always a disappointment.

These observations on the wandering tribes chiefly apply to those of Persian and Turkish origin. The Arabian tribes subject to Persia, inhabiting the shores of the Gulf, are more assimilated in their habits to the people they are derived from, than to that amid which they dwell. They continue to speak Arabic, and preserve almost all the customs of their original country. In general they dress like the Arabians, wearing, instead of the Persian cap, a light turban, and they are usually covered with a flowing cloak. Their manners, though less rude than those of the other tribes, retain much of the wildness and independence of their ancestors.

The diet of the Arabian tribes is more frugal than that of any other of the inhabitants. It consists chiefly of dates. But what others would consider a hardship, habit with them has converted into an enjoyment; and the Arab deems no food more delightful. Some years ago a woman, belonging to one of the Arab families at Abushehr, had gone to England with the children of the British resident at that place. When she returned, all crowded around her, to hear her report of the country she had visited. She described the roads, the carriages, the horses, the wealth and splendour of the cities, and the highly cultivated state of the country. Her audience were full of envy at the condition of Englishmen, and were retiring with that impression, when the woman happened to add, that the country only wanted one thing to make it quite delightful. "What is that?" was the general inquiry. "It has not a date tree in

it," said she. "I never ceased to look for one, all the time I was there, but I looked in vain." The Arabs no longer felt envy, but pity, for men, condemned to live in a country where there were no date-trees.

The Arabian tribes possess the power of flying from oppression when they cannot resist it. The sea is always open to them, and they are accustomed to it. Not only the islands of the Gulf, but the neighbouring territories of Turkey, and the opposite coast of Arabia, are inhabited by their brethren: and this, combined with their original habits, gives a freedom of sentiment and expression to them which is very striking. When a party of English gentlemen, who were hunting near Abusheher, were preparing to slip an English and an Arabian greyhound at a deer, to see which was the fleetest, one of them said the English dog would beat. A poor Arab, who had accompanied the party in hope of obtaining a trifling present for leading a dog, sprung forward, and exclaimed, with all the energy of his race, "You are wrong, sir! by Heaven, the Arab dog will win!"

The manners of some of the mountain tribes who inhabit the great ranges in the south of Persia, cannot be described, for they are hardly known: but we may conclude, that their usages are as little changed since the time of Alexander, as their relations to their sovereign are; and these, from the description of them by the historians of the Grecian conqueror, appear to have been exactly the same then as at present. Alexander is represented as having pursued the same policy toward them which the modern Kings of Persia are necessitated to adopt. He endeavoured to make them husbandmen and feeders of cattle, that, "having property of their own to defend, they might refrain from encroaching upon their neighbours[u]."

These rude tribes are no way envious of that civilisation

[u] Translation of Arrian, vol. ii. page 260.

of which we are so proud. We may wonder at their ignorance and prejudices; but we must recollect that men are formed by habit, and that all their sufferings and enjoyments are comparative. How often do we see them rejoicing under hardships and bondage, and repining at their lot when courted by liberty and fortune! The feelings imbibed from living in one state of society, disqualify us from judging of another: but he who has travelled over the greatest space will be most struck with the equal dispensation of happiness and misery; and his value for knowledge will not be diminished by his observing, that its possessors are not always the happiest. We should be grateful for the blessing of civilisation; but we should not assume too great a superiority over those who continue in a more barbarous state. A study of their manners, of the causes of their misery, and the sources of their happiness, may teach us many useful and important lessons. Human nature is always the same, in whatever garb it is clothed: and there can be none to whom it is of more consequence to contemplate society in its rudest state, than a nation which continues, amid luxury and refinement, to cherish an individual independence and a political freedom, grounded upon the institutions of a race of brave, but turbulent warriors; and not to be maintained except by the constant readiness to suffer every privation, rather than slavery.

Chapter XXIV.

ON THE CONDITION OF PERSIA, AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS.

Though no country has undergone, during the last twenty centuries, more revolutions than Persia, there is perhaps none less altered in its condition. The power of the sovereigns, and of the satraps of yore; the gorgeous magnificence of the court: the habits of the people; their division into citizens, martial tribes, and savage mountaineers; the internal administration; the mode of warfare; have continued to be essentially the same: and the Persians, so far as we have the means of judging, are not at present a very different people from what they were in the time of Darius, and of Noosheerwan.

There is no example, during more than twelve centuries, of any Mahomedan nation having attained a high rank in the scale of civilisation. All who have adopted this religion, have invariably been exposed to the miseries of an arbitrary and unsettled rule. Many reasons have been urged to account for this; especially the example of the prophet, and the nature of some fundamental tenets of his faith. The life of Mahomed, after he declared his mission, was passed in constant warfare; and he is scarcely more revered by his followers on account of his sanctity as "the deputed of God[x]," than for his personal courage and his skill as a general. Every Mahomedan ruler has consequently been able to plead, as a lawful excuse for his ambition, the desire of emulating the earthly glory of his prophet: and the Koran[y] has con-

[x] Russool-ollâ, or "the deputed of God," is his most common title.

[y] The Koran, which was composed by a martial leader during his contest for power, being recognised as the only source of written law in Mahomedan nations, may tend in no slight degree to keep them in comparative bar-

continually been quoted to shew, as applied to the friends or enemies of the faith, the necessity of obedience, and the virtue of violence.

Polygamy, and the seclusion of the female sex, which Mahomed practised and recommended, have no doubt had an influence, scarcely secondary to that of any other cause, in retarding the progress of civilisation. The mind is formed by its domestic habits: and every Mahomedan is a despot in his own house. From childhood to old age he hears of and sees nothing but arbitrary power. Accustomed only to obey or to command, he cannot understand what is meant by individual or political freedom: and he recognises in his monarch the same absolute power as he claims over all whom nature or fortune has placed under his own authority.

Other causes might be discovered in the ancient and present condition of the great kingdoms of Asia, to account in some degree for their never having attained a state of improvement comparable to that enjoyed by almost all those nations which form the present commonwealth of Europe: but the reasons already stated will fully explain that apathy on all points connected with the shape of their government, which is characteristic of every country inhabited by Mahomedans. Chiefs of tribes have combined to preserve their independence. Their followers, from their love of natural liberty, have clung to the habits of savage life rather than submit to oppression: but there has never been among those who professed this religion, one effort made for rational freedom, nor a desire shewn to impose any salutary and permanent check upon the absolute authority of the sovereign. If his cruelty occasions a revolt, the only use made of success is to set up another tyrant in his stead; whose first

barism. Commentaries may be written to explain the text in the manner best suited to those to whom the law applies; but the principle can neither be changed nor set aside: reason is fettered by faith; and men are condemned to receive their laws as articles of belief, on which it is impiety to exercise their judgment.

exercise of his power is in subduing the spirit of turbulence to which he has owed his elevation.

The history of Persia from the Arabian conquest to the present day proves the truth of these observations: and while the same causes continue to operate, no material change in its condition can be expected. Its prosperity will still depend upon the personal character of its monarchs: nor can the best of kings do more than promote it during the uncertain period of his own life. What consequences the recent approximation of Russia may have upon the future destiny of Persia, cannot easily be foretold: the Turks, wrapt up in the habits of their ancestors, and defended by their religious prejudices, have for ages resisted the progress of that civilisation with which they were surrounded: and this example might lead us to conclude, that vicinity of territory, and the consequent collision of opposite habits and creeds, is more likely to increase than to diminish those obstacles which have hitherto prevented any intimate social intercourse between Mahomedan and Christian nations.

Before I conclude a work in which an attempt has been made to convey to the English reader fuller information than he has hitherto possessed on the past history and present condition of Persia, it appears right to offer some reflections on the general character of the different classes of its inhabitants.

The personal characters of the Kings of Persia have been given in the course of this history: what remains to be said relates more to the qualities connected with their condition, than to their personal disposition or talents. Almost all have been religious, or at least punctual observers of the forms of their religion. This is essential (even if they are not sincere) to their power; and its necessity is inculcated from infancy. Morality is not thought of equal importance. Every Monarch is considered at liberty to indulge, from his earliest youth, in the grossest sensuality. The boundless

gratification of his passions is deemed a privilege of his condition: and this may be the main cause of the constant change of dynasties we meet with in this history. Families are elevated to power by the efforts of some great and extraordinary man: his immediate successors, stimulated by his example, and by the necessity of exertion to maintain and extend the dominion that his courage and talents acquired, pursue the same path: but their descendants are ruined by the fame of their forefathers. Instructed to believe themselves born to rule, they conceive that they have only to enjoy the power which they inherit. They give themselves up to the luxury by which they are courted; listen to the flatterers by whom they are surrounded: till, enervated and subdued by a life of indolence and vice, they fall before a popular native chief, or a foreign invader.

A Monarch of Persia acknowledges nothing as obligatory upon him but the ritual observances of his religion. Mercy, generosity, and justice, he admits to be virtues; but considers them as royal qualities, not duties. Accustomed to have every look obeyed, and to complete submission to his authority, he is as impatient of any obstacle to the fulfilment of his desires, as he is insensible to the value of devoted service. We discover from their history, that the Kings of Persia have, with some remarkable exceptions, almost always chosen their personal companions from among men of low birth and mean attainments. Those who exercise absolute power, and whose only title to be called great is derived from the splendour of their station, hate to be approached in their unreserved moments by men who have high pretensions, either from hereditary rank, or superior talents and virtue. They feel happier and more at ease when surrounded by a circle of an opposite description: and the pride of despotism is never so much gratified as when it can look around and see nothing but what rests entirely on its favour, and what consequently can be destroyed with the same breath that created it.

Few things can be more difficult than for a Monarch of Persia to continue humane, even if such should be his natural disposition. The constant habit of directing and witnessing executions must harden his nature: and the persons intrusted with the education of the princes, as if apprehensive that their tender feelings should interfere with the performance of their future duties, take them, when almost infants, to witness scenes at which men would shudder. These early lessons appear to have been almost uniformly successful; for we have hardly an instance of a King of Persia evincing any uncommon degree of humanity: while there are many to prove, that the habit of shedding blood often becomes a passion; by a brutal indulgence in which, human beings appear to lose the rank and character of their species.

The Sovereigns of Persia are sometimes compelled to devise the means of secretly destroying those powerful subjects whose allegiance they suspect, but whom they fear openly to accuse or to attack. Policy, and indeed self-preservation, may palliate such proceedings; but the necessity of having recourse to them cannot prevent their baneful influence on the mind, nor alter the impression they are calculated to make. Cruelty never excites more indignation than when combined with art; and the undisguised violence of tyrannical power appears like virtue when compared with the treacherous acts of its timid weakness.

These observations apply to all despots who have similar power: but, fortunately for mankind, in few nations is the authority vested in the chief ruler so absolute. We cannot be surprised, when we consider their condition, that the monarchs of this kingdom have, in general, been careless of the rights of others, tenacious of their own; that they have recognised no limit to their oppression but apprehension of revolt; that they have only measured their indulgence in pleasure by their power of enjoying it; that they have sought to amass treasure by all the means which did not violate such laws and usages as it was deemed dangerous to

infringe; that they have entered on wars with no views but those connected with personal glory; and that they have not considered the prosperity of their country an object of their care, except so far as it was calculated to promote their individual interests and reputation.

The character of the princes of the blood in Persia can never be correctly known. They always act under great restraint. Their manners are in general kind and prepossessing; as their principal object is to attach their associates, and to gain a popularity which may promote their future advancement. Though their situation should impress them with the necessity of great prudence, if not of dissimulation, flattery and the arrogance of high birth frequently counteract these salutary impressions: and, when intrusted with authority, they often display as much violence as if their brows were already encircled with that crown which is to invest them with despotic power.

The ministers and chief officers of the Court are almost always men of polished manners, well skilled in the business of their respective departments, of pleasant conversation, subdued temper, and very acute observation: but these agreeable and useful qualities are, in general, all that they possess. Nor is virtue or liberal knowledge to be expected in men whose lives are wasted in attending to forms; whose means of subsistence are derived from the most corrupt sources; whose occupation is in intrigues which have always the same objects, to preserve themselves, or ruin others; who cannot, without danger, speak any language but that of flattery and deceit; and who are, in short, condemned, by their condition, to be venal, artful, and false. There have, no doubt, been many ministers of Persia whom it would be injustice to class under this general description; but even the most distinguished for their virtues and talents have been forced in some degree to accommodate their principles to their station; and, unless where the confidence of their sovereign has placed them beyond the fear of rivals, necessity

has compelled them to practise a subserviency and dissimulation, at variance with that truth and integrity which can alone constitute a claim to the respect all are disposed to grant to good and great men.

The characters of the governors of provinces and cities are in a considerable degree formed on that of the sovereign: but the system of the government must always dispose them to abuse their brief authority. From their situation, however, they are in general more manly and open, both in manner and conduct, than the ministers and courtiers: and therefore, as a body, are entitled to more respect; for violence and injustice do not debase the nature of man so much as deceit and falsehood.

The religious orders are divided into several classes. The few who attain very high rank, are usually men of learning, of mild temper, and retired habits. They are very careful to preserve the respect they enjoy, by cherishing the impressions entertained of their piety and humility. It is rare to see them intolerant, except where they deem the interest of that religion, of which they are the head, in danger. The lower classes of the priesthood are commonly of a very opposite character. With little knowledge, and great pretensions, they demand a respect which they seldom receive; and so are among the most discontented of the community. The general disposition of the Persians to treat strangers of a different religion with kindness and hospitality, is a subject of constant irritation to them. They rail at all communication with infidels, and endeavour to obtain an importance with the lower orders by a display of their bigotry and intolerance. This class are often accused by their countrymen of indulging the worst passions. To say a man hates like a moollah, is to assert that he cherishes the most inveterate hostility.

There is a considerable difference of character among the inhabitants of the various cities and towns, originating in the opposite feelings and habits which they have derived from

their ancestors. The natives of Cazveen, Tebreez, Hamadan, Shiraz, and Yezd, are as remarkable for their courage, as those of Koom, Cashan, and Isfahan, are for their cowardice. The former are chiefly descended from martial tribes; the forefathers of the latter have for many centuries pursued civil occupations. But, though some of the citizens are less warlike than others, their shades of character are not of so much consequence as to prevent their being included in a general description. The whole of this community may be deemed, as far as regards their personal appearance, a fine race of men: they are not tall; but it is rare to see any of them diminutive or deformed, and they are in general strong and active. Their complexions vary from a dark olive to a fairness approaching to that of a northern European: and if they have not all the bloom of the latter, their florid healthy look often gives them no inconsiderable beauty. As a people, they may be praised for their quickness of apprehension, their vivacity, and the natural politeness of their manners. They are sociable and cheerful; and, with some remarkable exceptions, as prodigal in disbursement as eager of gain[a]. The higher classes of the citizens are kind and indulgent masters; and the lower ranks are, as far as respects the active performance of their duty, and the prompt execution of the orders they receive, the best of servants. In countries where the law grants equal protection to all ranks, and where servitude does not imply dependence, the master and servant are much more separated than in despotic states. In the latter, where there are no middle classes, the servant is often the humble friend, and lives in habits of intimacy which can only exist where the distinction is so great as to remove all danger of either forgetting his condition.

The falsehood of the Persians is proverbial; nor are they forward to deny this national reproach: but they argue, that this vice appertains to the government, and is the

[a] The lower classes of merchants are often very avaricious and sordid.

natural consequence of their condition: and there can be no doubt that, when rulers practise violence and oppression, those who are oppressed will shield themselves by all the means in their power: and when destitute of combination and strength, they can only have recourse to art and duplicity. Nor is the moral character always debased by the use of this defence: instances continually occur in Persia, as in other countries subject to an arbitrary government, where the head of a village, or the magistrate of a city, entitles himself to gratitude and admiration, by a virtuous and undaunted perseverance in falsehood, at the peril of his own life and property, to save others who consider him as their guardian and protector.

The frame of private society is, perhaps, still more calculated to render men artful and false. The wives and slaves of a despotic husband and master must have all the vices of their debased condition. The first lessons their children learn from the example of the persons they love, is to practise deceit; and this early impression is confirmed by all their future habits. They may hear and admire moral sentences on the beauty and excellence of truth; but prudence warns them against so dangerous a virtue. The oaths they constantly use to attest their veracity, are only proofs of their want of it. They swear by the head of the king, by that of the person they address, by their own, by their sons, that they are not asserting what is false: and if a stranger should continue to evince suspicion, they sometimes exclaim, "Believe me; for, though a Persian, I am speaking truth." There are, no doubt, some of the Persians who do not deserve to be included in this general description, and who are distinguished by their regard for truth: but their numbers are too inconsiderable to save their countrymen from the reproach of falsehood, as a prevalent national vice.

The citizens of Persia are not subdued by their situation into a submissive temper. They are easily inflamed into passion, and act, when under its influence, like men careless

of the result. A stranger, unacquainted with the nature of the government, and the latitude of speech which it permits in the persons it oppresses, is surprised to hear the meanest inhabitant of a town venting imprecations[a] against his superiors, nay, sometimes against the king himself. These extraordinary ebullitions of passion, which are very common among the lower orders, generally pass unheeded. Sometimes they may provoke a reproof, or a few blows; but they never receive consequence from the unwise interference of power.

Many of the inhabitants of the principal cities are men of some education: but even those who are not so, are remarkable for the fluency of their language. They express themselves with a freedom and boldness not always restrained by the disparity between them and the person they are addressing. Hajee Ibrahim, formerly prime minister, who gloried in the name of citizen, used to delight in relating a dialogue between his brother, who was Beglerbeg, or Governor of Isfahan, and a seller of vegetables in that city[b]. An extraordinary impost having been laid on every shop, the latter forced himself into the Governor's presence when he was giving public audience, and exclaimed, that he was totally unable to pay the tax. "You must pay it, or leave the city," was the reply. "I cannot pay it," said the man; "and to what other place can I go?"—"You may either proceed to Shiraz, or Kashan, if you like those towns better than this," said the governor. "Your brother," replied the shopkeeper, "is in power at one of these cities, and your nephew at the other: what relief can I expect in either?"—

[a] The Persians not only vent their abuse on the person who has offended them, but on his whole kindred, and particularly his female relatives. Their abuse is generally very obscene.

[b] Hajee Ibrahim repeated this anecdote to me with great animation. He, indeed, particularly delighted in mentioning any thing that reflected honour upon the spirit of the citizens of Persia, whom it was his policy through life to support aainst the wandering tribes of that country.

"You may proceed to court," said the ruler, "and complain to the king, if you think I have committed injustice."—"Your brother, the Hajee, is prime minister," said the man. "Go to hell!" exclaimed the enraged governor, "and do not trouble me any more!"—"The holy man [c], your deceased father, is perhaps there," said the undaunted citizen. The crowd could not suppress their smiles, and the governor, who shared the general feeling, bade the complainant retire, and said he would attend to his case, provided he would not bring a curse upon his family, by insisting that they shut him out from all hopes of justice, both in this world and the next.

The character of the military tribes differs essentially from that of the other Persians. The chiefs are often as much distinguished for their generosity as their courage. From their condition they are less artful than the ministers and principal civil officers. But they are not exempt from that vice, though it is corrected by their pride and violence. Arrogant from birth, and surrounded from infancy by devoted dependents, their minds are habituated to overrate their own pretensions, and depreciate those of others. When inflamed with passion, they lose the courtly manner which they are accustomed to assume, and give way to the most ungovernable rage. They seldom suffer from the bold imprudence of their language on these occasions, as they can always plead in excuse the habits of the rude class they belong to [d];

[c] The name of the father of the governor was Hajee Hâshem. The expression used by the shopkeeper was Hajee-murhoom, which means the deceased hajee, or "pilgrim."

[d] I one day heard a nobleman of one of these tribes use the most violent and insulting language of the prime minister. His imprudence appeared the greater, as some of the minister's particular friends were present. Apprehensive of the consequence, I next day asked him, if any thing had happened. "It is all settled," he said; "I have made an apology. I told the minister I was an Eellyatee, (a man of a wandering tribe); and that, you know, is an excuse for any thing a man can say or do."

and the allowance they demand upon this ground, is hardly ever refused, even by the monarch himself, if he has been the object of their intemperance. The character of these military nobles may be said to change with the state of their country: when that is settled for any long period, they lose a great deal of their native honesty and violence. Educated at the capital, where, in youth, they are generally kept as hostages for the good conduct of their fathers; and compelled to constant attendance on the king after they have attained manhood; they become in time courtiers, and except in being more haughty are not materially different from the other nobles and principal officers. We can neither praise them, nor any other of the higher ranks in Persia, for their strictness in either moral or religious duties: to the former, they do not even pretend to give much attention; and though they are careful to observe all the forms of the latter, they often seem indifferent to the substance, and are in the habit of discussing the tenets of their faith with a freedom sometimes bordering upon profaneness *.

* Religion is a favorite topic of conversation, particularly when a stranger of an opposite faith is of the party. It is not unusual to hear the subject treated in a manner which proves at least that there is the utmost latitude of speech. I have frequently listened to these discussions with some surprise. I heard a person of high rank one day exclaim, in a mixed company, where some priests were maintaining the sacred claims of the descendants of the prophet—" This is all very well for superstitious fools who know no better: but I have travelled and read, and have more than once met with a dog of a Syud, and an angel of a Jew!" This speech produced a hearty laugh at the expense of the holy man. I find in one of my manuscripts a very ludicrous instance of the open impiety of a nobleman now living in Khorassan. He heard a moollah describe, in the pulpit, the manner in which the angels Monker and Nakir visit the grave the moment after the corpse is deposited in it. He went away, determined to satisfy his mind by a physical experiment: and the next time he heard the priest mention the subject he exclaimed, before the astonished congregation—" All that fellow says is a lie! My servant died four days ago; and as I was resolved to discover the truth, I stuffed his mouth quite full with dry grain. I have since opened his grave, and the grain is exactly where it was placed: it is therefore quite impossible that he should have either spoken to man or angel!"

The Eellyâts, as a body, have the virtues and vices of their condition; are sincere, hospitable, and brave; but rude, violent, and rapacious. They are not in need of falsehood and deceit, and therefore not much in the habit of practising them: but if they have fewer vices than the citizens, it is evidently the absence of temptation, and the ignorance of luxury, which give them their superiority; for it is remarked that they never settle in towns, or enter them as victors, without exceeding the inhabitants in every species of profligacy [f].

The females who dwell in towns are usually placed in the situation of slaves; and, therefore, have many of the qualities which belong to that condition. The character of a race which can hardly be said to have any influence in the community, is of little importance; and if it were otherwise, we cannot have sufficient information to form any correct judgment upon it. If we believe common report, or the tales of Persian writers, the art and ingenuity of the women are often successful in eluding the jealous vigilance of their domestic tyrants. Of the females of the wandering tribes I have already spoken: they enjoy a fair portion of liberty; and if they are inferior to the natives of cities in beauty of person and softness of manner, they are superior to them in industry, in chastity, and many other virtues. We meet with frequent examples among this class of an elevation of sentiment, and an heroic courage which nothing but freedom could inspire.

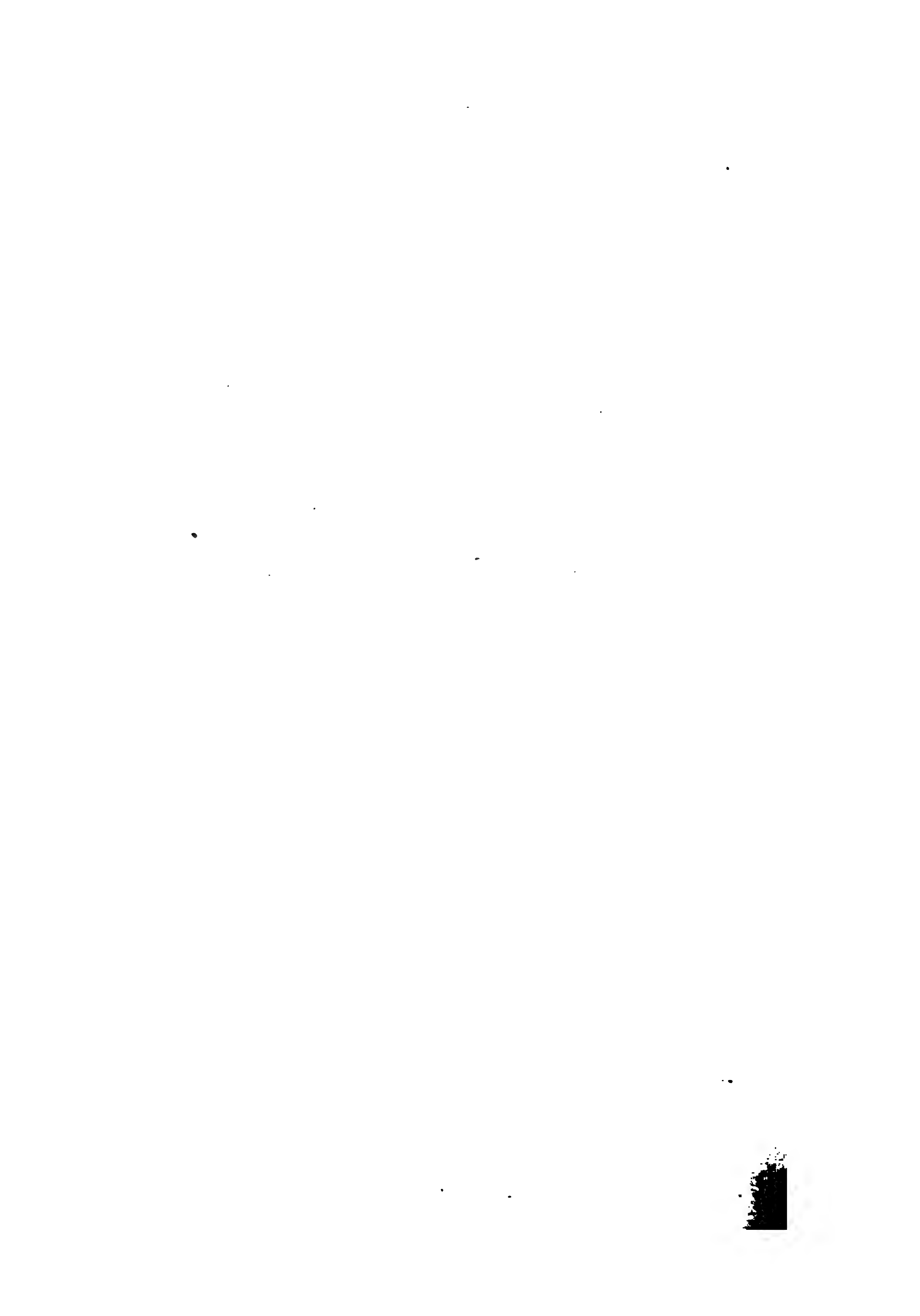
In speaking generally [g] of the Persians, we may describe

[f] It would be disgusting to enter into a catalogue of the vices of a people among whom the indulgence of unnatural lust is not considered a crime.

[g] This only applies to the Mahomedan population. The Armenians who live in Persia are a submissive and humble race, endeavouring by their industry to obtain a livelihood among a people by whom they are treated with harshness and contempt. The Jews are much more despised, and their character and condition are more degraded. I have before spoken of the few families of Guebres, or "worshippers of fire," who remain, and whom their Mahomedan conquerors seem to tolerate, that they may enjoy their triumph by protracted oppression.

them as handsome, active, and robust; of lively imagination, quick apprehension, and agreeable and prepossessing manners. As a nation they may be termed brave; though the valour they have displayed, like that of every other people in a similar state of society, has in a great degree depended upon their leaders, and the nature of the objects they have fought for. Their vices are still more prominent than their virtues. Compelled by the nature of their government to have recourse on every occasion to art or violence, they are alternately submissive and tyrannical. Many of their more serious defects may be attributed to the same cause; and there is no country in which so much of the immorality of its inhabitants can be referred to a bad system of internal administration. This reflection, though it may mitigate our sense of the depravity of individuals, leaves little hope of their amendment; for it is evident that this cannot be effected except by the concurrence of many radical changes, with a complete alteration in their political condition; an event which neither their past history nor present state can lead us to anticipate.

INDEX.



INDEX.*

* In consequence of an oversight at the time this work was sent to press, an incorrect spelling of many proper names has [illegible] from the former edition, throughout the first volume of the present one; [illegible] the Index, this has been corrected.

THE END.

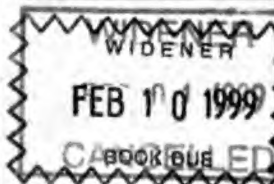
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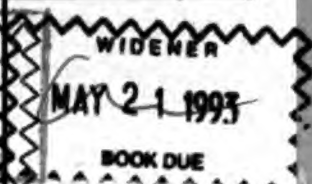
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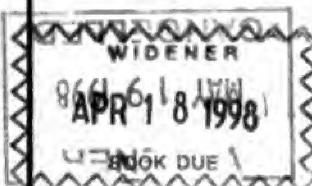





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